

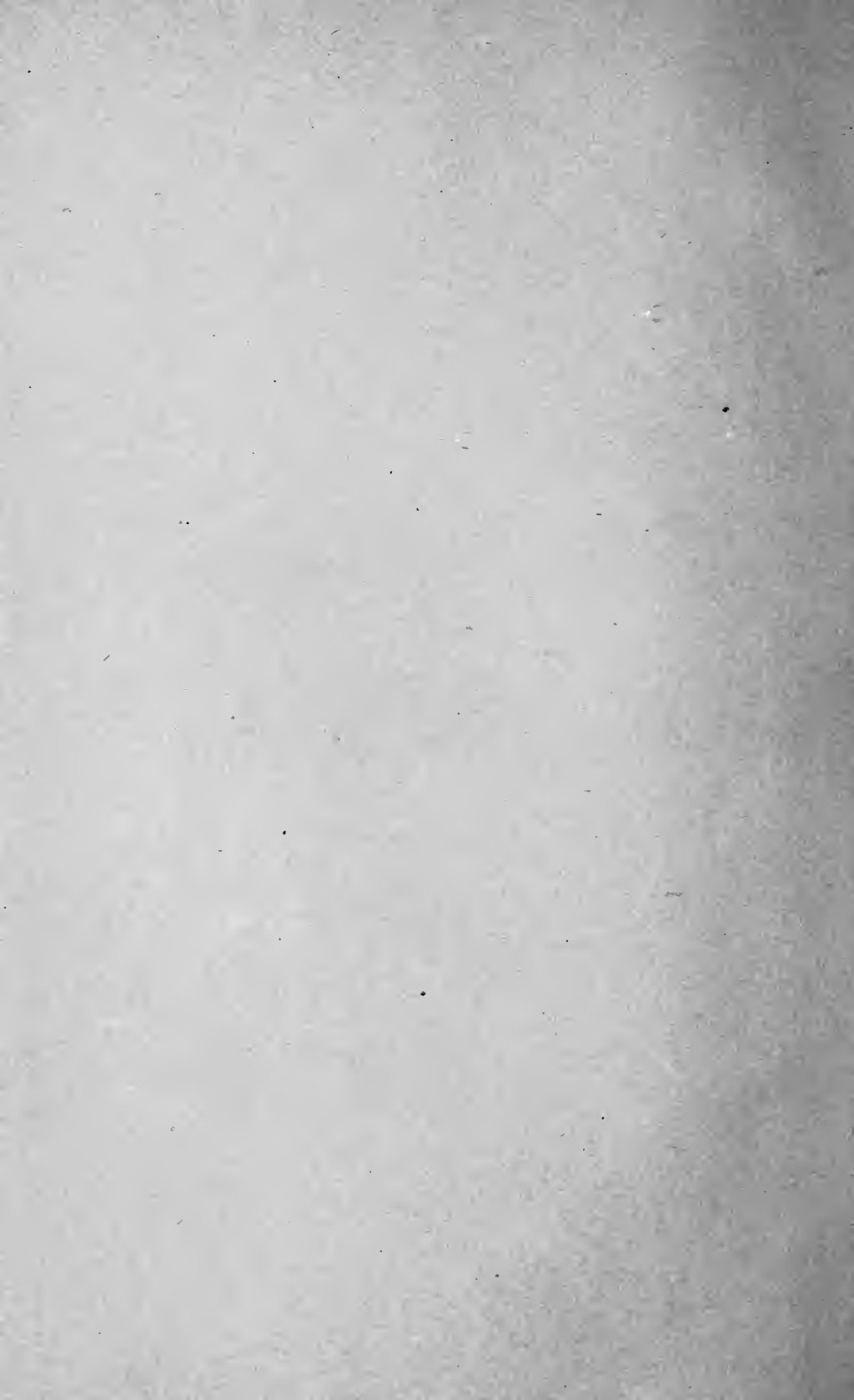
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ARROWS FROM TWO QUIVERS.

SERMONS.

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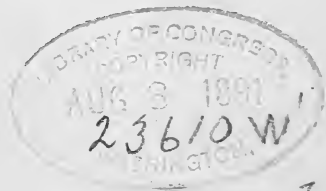
R. H. RIVERS, D.D.,

Of the Louisville Conference;

AND

H. C. MORRISON, D.D.,

Secretary Board of Missions.



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DEDICATION.

TO THE LOVERS OF CHRIST THIS WORK IS
DEDICATED BY THE

AUTHORS.

(3)

PREFATORY.

I BESPEAK a generous reception to this book now given to the world; its authors, its aims, its splendid presentation of sacred and sublime themes should secure for it high consideration. It contains thirty-four discourses contributed by Rev. Richard Henderson Rivers, D.D., and Rev. Henry Clay Morrison, D.D., seventeen from each, who hope to awaken a deeper interest in the true meaning of the gospel, and to throw a clearer light upon some of its passages. The discourses will be found to be fresh, highly figurative, and illustrative, bringing out in a charming way the teaching of the scriptural types and figures.

The authors are both men of eminence, with ample endowments for the accomplishment of the great task which they have undertaken. Dr. Rivers is a venerable, learned man, distinguished as a preacher and a writer, who brings the treasures which he has accumulated in a long life to lay them as a contribution to this splendid offering to the cause of Christ.

Dr. Morrison is in the full strength of his manhood; his fame as a preacher extends throughout the country, and now in the plenitude of his intellectual power he brings some of the richest fruit of his consecrated life to lay his tribute to our Lord by the offering of his venerated friend.

The book does not undertake to give a didactic statement of the doctrines taught in the Scriptures, but is a splendid interpretation of the gospel, revealing its meaning in a style that captivates the heart and enlightens the mind.

There is no attempt at a revelation of new truths: there can be no discoveries in the realm of moral science. Men may explore continents, or spread their adventurous sails in remote seas in the hope of finding unknown islands; or sweep the heavens with the most powerful telescopes in search of some unseen planets, but there are no glasses strong enough to bring to view the scenery of the celestial world. The revelation from God has been made, it is complete, the distance between the visible and

invisible realm is too wide to be bridged, and no authentic voice will break the silence of the universe to instruct us as to our destiny. But there are still larger views of what has been revealed to obtained; there are broad fields to be surveyed, and the Holy Spirit will aid the diligent searcher after truth to find new illustrations of hidden meanings. The angel sent to lead our first parents out of the Garden of Eden, after giving them some ideas as to their future life outside of their former happy home, left them to explore for themselves the wide world before them; but Providence was their guide, and threw light in their pathway.

Doubtless those who seek to make the revealed word better understood—pre-eminently those who stand in the pulpit to preach the everlasting gospel—do receive divine inspiration; clearer light breaks upon their vision, and they bring out of the deep mysteries which are hidden from others rich views, just as the miner who digs into the deep soil with all his vigor brings into the light of day the yellow gold that had long been concealed from human sight.

The discourses in this book will attract people of culture, and they will linger over the illumined pages.

I have heard the great preachers of the world—Spurgeon in his Tabernacle, Canon Farrar in Westminster Abbey, Henry Ward Beecher in his Plymouth Church, and the men of large stature in our own South, and their utterances still sound in my ears; many of their words still live on the pages which will be read by coming generations. Such appeals ought not to be lost to the world. The marble structures of faultless architecture on the Acropolis of Athens are but splendid ruins, but the great discourse of St. Paul delivered there will live forever.

I hope that the noble discourses contained in this volume are destined to live beyond our time, and that they will awaken the interest and strengthen the hope of those in coming generations who look for light in the way that leads to heaven.

HENRY W. HILLIARD,

Atlanta, Ga., July 1, 1890.

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SERMONS.

(11)



ARROWS FROM TWO QUIVERS.

I.

THE LOOM OF LIFE.

“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle.” (Job vii. 6.)

UNDER a profound sense of life’s brevity Job finds a domestic simile to express his thought. The loom, the web, the flying shuttle—each has a voice, and under inspiration’s touch they speak to us in a language we cannot mistake.

I. *The life loom.*

This invisible structure is of divine origin. Of the paradise pattern, unchanged and unimproved since God first blew his breath upon it and set it in motion, six thousand years have not remodeled its intricate machinery. Currents of air and currents of blood combine to keep it in motion, and circulation and respiration will perpetuate its movement until the web of human history is woven and complete.

This life loom is under God’s control, the only piece of machinery not committed to our hands. He determines the length of the life warp in each individual; and each, alike, fills that warp with woof of his own choosing. Thus, while I may not determine the length of my life, I do determine its character and colorings. I decide what shall fill it up and make it what it is.

1. *The shuttle flight makes the web.* Though so rapid as to elude the eye, it makes the web with just that speed. The days fly with such velocity that we are ever being surprised at finding them gone. Each crossing shuttle adds its thread, and each flying day adds its length to the life that is passed. The shuttle never crosses the warp twice in the same place, but each added thread throws it forward to a new crossing. To-day claims its own place, and gives no room to to-morrow. To-day fills its page with its own history, nor leaves even space that to-morrow may write its name. To-morrow is thrown forward to find room and lodging for itself. To-day may shove its responsibility forward upon to-morrow, but to-morrow can throw nothing back upon to-day. Of all abused and overburdened days in the calendar of human life *to-morrow* is that day. The man does not live who has not abused his to-morrows. Like the unfortunate child of disgraced parentage, we doom our to-morrows to failure by entailing upon them the sins of to-day.

2. *The shuttle's contents color the web.* It is the thread drawn from the heart of the flying shuttle that gives coloring to the web. It is dark, or light, or mixed, or varied, by what the shuttle gives forth in its flight.

The warp of life is from God, and has all possibilities. It may be made any and all colors by the woof we weave into it. That which comes out of the heart and is woven into the character makes the life what it is. Men weave their lives out of their hearts as spiders weave their webs out of their bowels, and right life can no more be made from a defective heart

than sound cloth from rotten thread. If the issues of the cloth are out of the shuttle, so the issues of a man's life are out of his heart; and that heart must pass a divine change before it can give out material for a right life. It is not in the things of the carnal nature to make a perfect life. The material for a right character must come from above. Heaven gets nothing from earth or humanity that it doesn't first give. If the sun look down upon the beauty of a rose, he must first give light and heat to unfold it. If God have the honor of a beautiful life, he must first furnish the graces to produce that beauty. The graces will all grow in this world's latitudes, but the seeds are imported from heaven.

Fill the fruit-vase with apples, peaches, oranges, grapes, and bananas—all ripe and luscious and tastefully arranged, while some of the pendent clusters half conceal the vase—and you have an attraction. The fruits of the Spirit are sufficient in variety and richness to make the life beautiful. But it requires time and divine power to eradicate the things of the carnal nature and produce the fruits of the Spirit. It takes time and toil to transform the wild and tangled forest into fields and flower-gardens. And so it takes time to eradicate the natural and establish the spiritual growth in the heart and life.

It is wonderful to see a great, burly man, mostly animal, who has lived under the dominion of his lower nature and given rein to his natural tendencies, when he is born of God and begins to grow in an upward and better direction. His affections begin to lap over his passions; his love begins to shade his ill-temper, the bad things in him withering and

dying out of his life, and things "belonging to the spirit" beginning to live and grow in him. The strong man becomes patient as the lamb, gentle as the mother, artless as the little child. This is right life growing out of the heart under the benign influence of grace.

II. *What constitutes perfect character?*

The æsthetics say: "It takes *fineness, fullness, and harmony* to constitute perfection." Fine silk can as easily be made from the filthy flyings of a woolen factory as perfect character from the unregenerate nature. It is "from above," and not from nature. Only grace can produce fineness. Grace has a transmuting power. It transmutes the forces of nature into the Christian graces as the fruit-tree transmutes the compost at its roots into the most luscious fruit. Let divine grace be implanted in the strong nature and it will change the forces of that strong life into "love, joy, peace," and all the perfect fruits of the spirit.

1. *Fullness*, the second element in perfect character, is dependent upon the individual. If he be fully given up to the transmuting power of the Holy Spirit, his entire being will be transformed. His character will be full in proportion to the heavenly influences that he may work into it. Some characters are like badly woven cloth, with thin and sleazy places, much as some silk fabrics you have seen, with slipped spots, commonly called "slip silk"—the sort of man who is very good in spots. There is quite an amount of "slip silk" in society and in the Church. You don't buy the fabric that is slipped. It is at a discount. Men do not invest in the character that has slips.

They want to see the character sound and solid and full all the way through; the character that has the fullness of a sound foot-ball, that may be kicked to and fro by a score of burly boys, and still rebound and come back to its place and fullness after each foot-stroke. The ball that has no rebound, but lies mashed in at one side, with no power to regain its rotundity, is of little worth in the play.

How often we see a man kicked in at one side! The devil or some one else has given him a thrust that is more than he can bear, and he never regains his moral rotundity; but, like the kicked-in foot-ball, he has about half shape and half force on moral lines. Some are of little worth after the shock of a great trial in their religious life. Blessed is the man who has in him enough of the heavenly resilience, the divine rebound to "endure all things," to hold his moral shape and fullness, despite all the kickings, human and infernal. That is the need of the Church—*men, full men*, men who hold their own in the play of life and destiny.

2. *Harmony.* There can be no perfection without this third element. The fabric may be of good material, and well woven, but with such disharmony in its colors as to destroy its value. Give to the finest fabric the penitentiary stripe, and no one will purchase it: you destroy its worth. Take the grandest Steinway instrument and have one note too high and another too low, and Blind Tom can't make music on it. The notes all there, but out of tune, out of harmony.

How frequently we see men who need tuning! One is a grand, good man, but he is painfully sticklish for certain insignificant things. Another has a

temper keyed a little too high; another has a fraction too much "gush" for genuine sincerity. One man has too much of the positive in his make-up; another is too negative for success, either in business or religion. One hasn't quite patience enough, and another lacks a decimal of brotherly love.

How painfully conscious we are of our disharmonies! The remedy is in consecration. Give all to God. Put the whole being in the hands of the divine artist. Let him adjust the disharmonies and bring us into accord with himself, and life becomes a perpetual song.

3. *The central element of character.* There is a something around which the fullness, fineness, and harmony gather, and by which they stand; that which we mean by the word "stamina." It is from the old word "*histemi*," meaning *to stand*. It is the *standing* power. In the flower it is the upright stem; in the tree it is the ligneous fiber that gives it strength; in the man it is moral backbone, and that is the bone of all the bones. A man may get on in life though he be minus a leg, hand, or arm; and we knew a woman to make a fortune who had no arms; but we have never known any person to succeed without a backbone. It was this moral stamina that made Daniel grand in the den, and Job grand on the ash-heap. This found expression when Israel's leader said: "Let others do as they may; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Men after this sort are the need of this compromise age—men who stand up and stand out for God, Chimborazo-like, towering above the mass that worship the world; detached men; men on God's side, without waiting to see which side that is.

Men in politics have grit to stand by their party at all costs. The Church needs that manner of courage that stands by its colors, cost what it may. Our friends of the world are solicitous lest we ministers should go into politics. If some of them were as anxious to get into religion as they are to keep us out of politics, they would have a more comfortable conscience, a sweeter breath, and a happier home.

Too much of the Christianity of the present day is of that pliable kind that fits every thing and everywhere. Mechanics have what they call the "universal joint." That is an invention for convenience, by which the force of a machine may be turned toward all points of the compass—east, west, north, south, up, down, every way. It is a valuable thing in mechanics, but a failure in religion. The life that takes all shades, and yet has no decided color—at home, everywhere: in the church or at the gaming-club, at the Sunday morning sacrament or the Sunday evening pleasure drive—is never a success.

This sort of universal godliness is too universal for success on gospel principles. He who weaves his life on this plan is weaving a mixed fabric: all colors mixedly and no color decidedly; a fabric with dark and light shades, thick places and thin ones, knaps, slips, dropped and broken threads; such a fabric as one would not place on exhibition at the State fair. And yet life, as we weave it, shall be unrolled and on display at the final day.

4. *We weave what we wear.* The life web, having passed the judgment inspection and judgment sentence, will then become our own apparel, and we shall wear it through eternity just as we have woven it.

Like the days of the Confederate struggle, wherein our wives and mothers wove what we wore, so in this life's struggle we make and weave what we wear in the future.

It is a great mistake to conclude that God will surprise us in the resurrection with a new garb of such resplendence as we have never dreamed. He has but one new robe for us, and that is "immortality." It will be the same old character, and even the same old body, made immortal. "This mortal must put on immortality." This body, this individuality, shall be made immortal. Just as I am, just as I have made my character, just as I have woven the life web, shall I remain to eternity. I made it, gave it its texture and its coloring; and now God makes it immortal, sets the colors, and it becomes the garb of my eternity.

Then are you willing to wear your own colors? Society is sometimes shocked at the incoming of some "loud" style. I dare say that if some were suddenly made immortal in the life colors which they are now weaving, and were introduced into celestial society, it would produce a sensation in the glorified circles.

Imagine yourself in heaven dressed out in all the inconsistencies and secret sins and petty meannesses of your life, all in full colors and hanging as so much tormenting toggery about you, and you in the midst of those who are in "white robes." The Master gave your experience when he painted the portrait of the guest without the "wedding garment." God will not bring us into this society until we have done as did the white-robed company, "washed our

robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Haste, then! "Wash and be clean," ere you be made immortal in your sins!

Finally, God is seeking to make us better. The sun is ever trying to draw out the little seeds from the earth and clothe them with new beauty; trying to coax out the daisies, and unfold the hyacinths, and bring out the blushing clover-blossoms, and ripen the wheat, and redden the fruits, and make the face of nature lovely and beautiful.

God is our sun, ever striving to draw out the best things in our nature; trying to color our life and character with such hues as will give eternal beauty. Then we should love God as the birds and flowers love the sunlight. "In winter the birds love to catch the last rays of the evening sun; and are found in the afternoon upon the banks facing the west, or swinging on the topmost boughs of the trees. On the mountains, as the sun gets low, the birds take to the slopes that face west; while in the morning they betake themselves to the eastern slopes to meet the sun's rays. The golden plovers ascend from slope to slope as each becomes shaded by the intervening heights, until they collect on the very last ridge on which the evening sun can fall."

Shall we live by the beautiful lesson? Seek to live in the light of God as the birds in the light of the sun. Let each thread in the life web be woven in that light, and we shall thereby detect any thing that should not go into the fabric. The web woven in this light will stand the judgment light, and will do to wear in eternity.

When the earth-mountains fling their shadows, and

it begins to grow dark, let us then, like the golden plovers, ascend to a higher slope; let each gathering shadow drive us up higher until life shall close in the glory of the setting sun! And let us hasten upward, "for our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle."

M.

II.

THE VISITOR FROM EDMOM.

“Who is it that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me. (Isaiah lxiii. 1, 2, and first clause of third verse.)

THE dramatic power of this passage is unsurpassed. The prophet, while standing in silent meditation, suddenly beholds a wonderful personage. Startled by the unexpected vision, he inquires: “Who is it that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?” He is answered by the Being who has attracted his attention and called forth the inquiry: “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

In the analysis of this passage I hope to show that its scope and design are to exhibit Christ as the representative of the human race. Throughout the Scriptures we are presented with two great representatives of the human race—Adam and Christ. Says St. Paul: “Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s [Adam’s] disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made right-

eous." Sin abounded through Adam, grace has much more abounded through Jesus Christ. Through Adam sin reigned unto death; through Christ grace reigned unto eternal life. Again it is said: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." As by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. As he is represented to us in the Bible we behold Adam standing amidst the graves of his children, palsied by age and corrupted by sin; a shade of deepest melancholy is over his face, and words of irrepressible sorrow fall from his lips. O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death? My sin blighted Eden and brought death and all our woe. Jesus, girt with omnipotence and filled with mercy, responds with a voice loud enough to wake the dead and powerful enough to annihilate death itself: "I am the resurrection and the life."

1. In the text, Jesus, as our greatest and last representative, appears as coming from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah. He is the representative of both Jew and Gentile. Descended from Abraham, he came also from Ruth. Of the descendants of Shem, he could represent the poor outcast and degraded sons of Ham and the more elevated and civilized and intelligent sons of Japheth. The three great races may each claim him as theirs. No one people, nor tribe, nor language can appropriate him; but all may claim him as the universal Saviour. Jacob and Esau, Sarah and Ruth, Greek and Indian, the European and African, may all alike claim him as their Saviour, honor him as their representative, and crown him as their King.

2. Again, he is represented in dyed garments, clothed in the humble garb of a servant, and at the same time wearing regal apparel. What a paradox! Clothed as a servant and shining in royal apparel. The first interrogatory shows him to us as the representative of races, the second as the representative of classes. He is a King and a servant. He is as strong as the lion of Judah's tribe, and gentle as the most delicate woman. He is the Saviour of all. The king on his throne may hide himself in his pavilion and take refuge beneath his shadow; the ignoble slave may trust him as the fountain of light and life and liberty. Wealth may look up to him and rejoice; poverty may trust in him and become rich. Toil may gaze upon him and be eased of its burdens; while nobility itself may ascend to a loftier elevation by casting all worldly glory at his feet. Youth, amid the perplexities of the career upon which with inexperienced feet it is about to enter, may look up to him and exclaim:

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.

Old age may exclaim:

I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand.

Haggard want, with a smile upon the face and joy in the sunken eye, can cry out with holy confidence:

Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more.

The living can say:

Whence the healing waters flow,
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.

Strong Deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield.

And the dying from the brink of Jordan may sing:

Now I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.

And all people of every land and nation and tongue
and kindred may join in one grand chorus:

Songs of praises, songs of praises,
We will ever give to Thee.

Proceeding with our analysis, we next behold him as the great representative Teacher of mankind. He speaks in righteousness. Not a subject in all the wide range of human responsibility or human destiny but is discussed by him with a simplicity, a beauty, and a power which belong to no other teacher. Avoiding all technical terms, shunning all metaphysical discussions, ignoring all the schools of philosophy, caring nothing for the oracular utterances of the academy or the porch, he never touched a subject that he did not make lucid, he never presented a truth that was not luminous, and he never spoke but in righteousness. His illustrations, taken from every-day life, astonish by their appositeness and their variety, and actually distance expectation and defy imitation. The utterance of one of his parables would have given immortality to any other teacher. The prayer which he taught his disciples, though uttered by the pious for eighteen centuries, though lisped by infancy and trembling on the lips of age, though transferred to canvas and transformed to verse, though

chanted by the choir, and though almost spoken in the tremulous and deep tones of the organ, has never yet been exhausted of its marrow and its fatness. So it is with all his inimitable utterances. They astonish us by their variety, attract us by their simplicity, affect us by their tenderness, move us by their spirituality, and warm us by their love. Age cannot impair their freshness, and no repetition can lessen their power. They embrace every theme of death, life, and immortality which ought to engage the attention, enlist the feelings or control the conduct of rational and immortal beings. They inculcate every virtue and arrest all forms of vice in its very beginning—in the thoughts and feelings. He spake as never man spake, and always in righteousness. He never made a mistake in word or doctrine, in precept or in practice. He spoke in parables and in proverbs, in the boldest denunciations and in the sweetest promises, to all classes and conditions, in the city and in the wilderness, to listening thousands and to a lone woman; and to this day, after all the caviling of infidelity, he stands the great, unrivaled, original Teacher, who never committed a blunder, was never entrapped by his enemies, was ever consistent with himself, and always spoke in righteousness. To this day his teachings shine with ever-increasing brightness, and defy the heart to exhaust their love, and no intellect has ever probed their depth. And yet, wonderful paradox, they are so simple that a child may embrace them, and so transparent that the failing eye of old age may look through them. So potent are these inimitable teachings that in their presence ignorance becomes intelligence, corruption becomes pure, sor-

row looks up and smiles, and guilt puts on the robe of innocence.

3. But we pass on to a still fuller analysis of this magnificent description. He who declares himself to be the great Teacher speaking in righteousness next proclaims himself as mighty to save.

His power to save is seen:

1. In that he satisfied the demands of stern and inflexible justice—demands which neither man nor angels could meet.

Said Justice: "Man, I would know thy weight;
If weight thou hast, I spare; if not, I slay."

Man leaped the scale, it mounted at his word.

Said Justice: "Less than nothing. Where's my sword?"

But Virtue was there, and her small weight did try.

The scale unsunk, still kicked the beam on high.

But Mercy, the fairest dove that ever flew,

From Calvary brought a twig of crimson hue.

The scale, it sunk on the other side,

Man smiled, and Justice said, "I am satisfied."

He alone could turn away the wrath of God, avert the storm of divine vengeance, meet the claims of a violated law, hush the thunders of Sinai, and he alone could solve the problem, "How can God be just and justify the ungodly?" When the cloud of vengeance spread its murky folds over the world, he drew from its bosom the fiery bolt and received it in his own heart. He then irradiated its darkness with the light of hope and spanned it with the bow of promise. In the emphatic language of the Bible, "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." He tasted death for every man. He was our substitute. He took our place, assumed our poverty, and received our punishment. He bore our

sins and suffered the untold agonies of the garden and the cross, until justice sheathed its sword, and with features relaxed and voice of tender sympathy exclaimed, "I am satisfied." Then truth cried aloud, "Mighty to save!" and ten thousand echoing voices from earth and sky, from angels and men, "Mighty to save!"

2. His power to save is seen in the next place in the transforming and conservative influence of his divine religion upon nations. It has converted England from a nation of barbarians, poisoned with Druidism and reveling in human blood, to the most enlightened and progressive nation on the globe. The light of civilization shed over England by him who is mighty to save has made the "fast-anchored isle" the wonder and the glory of the nineteenth century. Her laws and literature, her morals and civilization, her benevolence and humanity are all the results of her open Bibles and her Protestant Christianity. And "woe be the day" when proud and potent England, yielding to the false teachings of Mill and Huxley, shall depart from the light of Christianity. Christianity breathed upon the mountains of Switzerland, the snows of Russia, the vine-clad hills of France, the olive-groves of Spain, and upon the laws and government of Prussia, as also upon the academies and universities of Germany, and that breath, so pure and vital, has been the sole salvation of Europe from vandal barbarism and widespread and hopeless degradation. It is the moral power of the gospel, its power to save, that has given to America all its glory, and the lack of it has produced all its shame. Had religion been kept pure, had the Church never formed any adulter-

ous connections with the State, had the simplicity of the primitive Church not been substituted by gorgeous and imposing ceremonies that almost destroyed its vital power, Eden in its pristine glory would not have surpassed the present condition of the world. But notwithstanding all this, his power to save has kept some who have not defiled their garments, has saved the human race from entire and universal destruction, has kept aglow the spirit of earnest piety in the hearts of his believing children, and has given an impulse to progress which will continue with accelerated speed until the banner of the cross shall float in triumph from the crumbling walls of the temple of idolatry, and the songs of salvation shall make the earth vocal with praise.

3. He is mighty to save, as is seen in his power to bring all instrumentalities into his service. He can make all nature speak in one harmonious voice, and invite the world to the service of him to whom all nature owes its origin. The heavens declare his glory, the firmament showeth his handiwork. The sun rolling in gorgeous splendor, the moon revolving in queenly dignity, the planets like fiery cruisers rushing with inconceivable velocity, law, and order, and fulfilling their various rounds with an exactitude of time which does not vary a minute in a thousand years, the fixed stars lighting up the celestial vault like so many brilliant camp-fires at night, all the agents of almighty power, and the witnesses, silently, yet eloquently, attest the divine perfections. He can bring all the beauties of heaven, all the grandeur and glory of earth to attest his power and exhibit his skill. The fire and hail, the snow and vapor fulfill

his word. Storm and calm, light and darkness, life and death, men and angels, peace and war, ignorance and learning, goodness and wrath may all be made to praise him. He can and does employ all agencies and instrumentalities throughout his vast dominions to enlist man in his service and bring the world to the Saviour.

4. His power to save is seen in the individual salvation of all that come to him. He casts out none that apply. He has power on earth to forgive sin. His salvation washes away all pollution, removes all guilt, and brings in upon the soul a new creation. The vilest sinner is made to rejoice in sins forgiven and a heart renewed. Old things pass away, and all things become new. The man whom Jesus saves sees with new eyes and hears with new ears. He rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. His soul aspires. His faith claims the promises and clings to the cross. His affections gush in sweet sympathy with all that is pure and good, and with loving energy embrace the Saviour. Duty is felt in all the force of moral obligation, and is discharged with a conscience void of offense toward God and man. The current of feeling flows in a new channel, and while the power of the will is increased the happy convert no longer exclaims: "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?" The fear of death is removed, and the terror of contemplating the last judgment gives place to serene hope or exultant joy. The grave loses its gloom because the light of redemption illumines it, and he who is mighty to save has conquered the power of death and proclaimed himself the resurrection and the life.

5. His power to save is seen in that he saves from eternal death. He is the Saviour from all the pains and agonies of the second death. He saves from the fires which ever burn and from the storm that ever rages. He saves the soul from being lost. A lost soul! Who can conceive its fearful, hopeless, endless doom? Cast into outer darkness—a darkness which can never be relieved, never mitigated. It is the darkness of a starless night, upon whose sky no sun is ever to rise. It is the darkness which no light will ever dispel and no hope can ever enter. It is outer darkness—away out and out amid the scenes of horror and of dread, from which the soul instinctively shrinks. It is the wreck of all that is delightful in society, joyous in hope, sweet in friendship, holy in tender sympathies, glowing in imagination, or lofty in action. It is darkness visible; it is darkness palpable; it is darkness eternal. No ray of light can ever penetrate, can ever reach, the outer verge of that horrible darkness which, like the successive waves of an angry sea, shall come over the lost spirit which has rejected the offer of mercy from him who is mighty to save. From such a fate he alone can save us, and from that doom his mighty and far-reaching mercy alone can rescue us.

6. But he saves in heaven. His salvation exalts to the throne of God. It conquers sin, paralyzes death, dismantles the grave, and bears the soul redeemed and disenthralled to the cloudless light of eternal day. There is no night there. No clouds gather in murky folds to shut out the true light which shines and shall shine forever in heaven. Before that light the sun himself grows pale and then

disappears forever. The unearthly, eternal glory of the Holy Trinity pours forth such a radiance over all celestial plains that all the sons and daughters of redeeming love feel no need of the light of the sun, but bask forever amid scenes brighter than prophet or bard ever conceived. For it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive of the sublime grandeur of his holy inheritance. But once more the prophet asks: "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?" He answers: "I have trod the wine-press alone."

Alone? Yes; all alone he trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath. It is doubtful with me if there is a more expressive term, as applied to the Saviour's sufferings, than this word "alone." He had none to help him. Accursed by scribes and Pharisees, condemned by Pilate, betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, forsaken by his disciples, he was alone on the cross—alone to avert the wrath of God and save a lost world. I have thought of loneliness as I have been in a great city and felt myself alone amidst thousands of human beings, all strange to me. I have seen the poor culprit alone in his cell, shut out from all human society by bars and bolts and frowning walls. I have seen the daughter, the spoiled and petted child of wealth and fashion, driven from the home of her father and mother, and forbidden ever again to enter the family circle or to utter the sacred name which she had dishonored. But all this, and more, is not to be compared to the loneliness of the suffering Son of God. Then I have seen the widow, whose husband had been slain in battle, alone in her weeds of mourning, without father or mother, and

feeling that she was alone in the world. But, my brethren, no loneliness is to be compared to that which Christ endured when he said: "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Then he drank the bitter cup of spiritual death, and felt that even his Father had allowed him to pass under the rod of the divine law, with no hand to uphold him and no words to cheer him.

Now, if this view of Christ does not lead you to him, I know not what can. Argument will be powerless, and appeals will be of no avail. Promises will not encourage, and anathemas will not alarm. Allow me, then, to beseech you to come and join company with the hosts of the redeemed who will crowd around the Saviour and crown him Lord of all.

R.

III.

SATAN'S SIEVE.*

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke xxii. 31, 32.)

PETER was a fisherman, for the reason that there were no railroads in his day. Had there been, I am sure he would have been a railroad man. He was the right material—an out-and-out nature, honest, earnest, open-handed, unselfish; and his mother-in-law lived in the home with him. He was strong, fearless, impetuous, hardy, rough-handed, not often scared, and took risks as they came, and wasn't careful of consequences. Withal, there is something so noble and generous in his nature that we all love him. He had a *penchant* for speech-making. He made more speeches than all the eleven. He always spoke from his heart, and spoke as he felt. The Master had to rebuke him occasionally, yet he loved him so that he made his resting-place in Peter's home.

The railroad life is a fast life. A man dashes into danger, and does his thinking about it afterward. Peter's very nature was like this. He was a minute man. Provoked, his sword was out and cutting and slashing into the very heart of danger without think-

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ing. He had all the elements of the railroad man—soul, body, and spirit.

1. *This text sets the gate ajar.* Here we get a glimpse of that unknown realm wherein is perpetual conflict—the spirit domain, which is a theater of antagonisms. We can see only the natural, but Christ surveys both realms, natural and supernatural. He sees Satan's movements and knows his aims. While the powers of darkness are so malignant, and their plans too subtle for our cognition, it is a grand thought that our leader surveys the field and notes each movement of the subtle forces. His omniscience is as a divine field-glass that sweeps the entire infernal realm and detects every movement for the destruction of his followers.

His words were a surprise. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you." What astonishment! What had Satan to do with him? He had not seen Satan, but Satan had plotted his ruin. While Peter had not thought of danger, Christ had seen his peril; and that peril was so great that he had gone into a conflict of prayer for him.

Life has literal dangers on every hand. Death, in a thousand forms, lurks in the points and turns of every life. But those dangers multiply about some lives. I talk now with a class of men who carry their lives in their hands. You part from dear ones at the doorway in the morning without assurance of greeting them when the run is made. Certain you are to pass dangers before you return. They may next see you as you are lifted lifeless from the wreck. But exposure to danger begets indifference to it, and this indifference does but increase the danger. Many the

man who has lost his life by his very familiarity with danger. I saw a daring man adjust a rod on a church-spire. It was a dizzy height. The streets were lined with spectators as he lingered for an hour at that spire-tip, with certain death beneath should he fall. It was an hour of excitement with that little town. There is where the railroad man spends life—up over the great abyss of eternity, with only a point between him and death. His passing from coach to coach is over thundering death; climbing to the car-top, he is clambering over destruction; running the upper deck of the long freight train, he leaps the death-stream 'twixt each car. Add to this broken rails, unsound trestles, mistaken schedules, misread orders, and the railroad life is a sport with death. Besides, half the perils are never known. How many are the accidents barely escaped—hair-breadth passes of which you know not! You know the danger by the actual occurrence of the tragedy; how many come within a particle and yet are passed! Could you look back and see the unseen dangers, the soul would sicken at the sight.

But flesh and blood perils are not the most numerous. There are more soul-wrecks than train-wrecks, and they are far more dreadful. A railroad wreck is a thing of a day: a few mangled forms, a wife widowed, a family orphaned, an engine crushed, an engineer put on a crutch or on a wooden leg for life, transportation stopped for six hours, a sensation for the morning paper, and there it ends. The *debris* is soon removed, damage repaired, dead buried, tears dried, and old Time wets his finger at his lips and silently rubs out the scene. But a soul-wreck can

never be remedied: There is no alleviation. God himself cannot repair the ruin or remove the *debris*. The blood cannot be washed out. Like the stain on the hand of Lady Macbeth, all the tides of eternity cannot wash out the stain of a self-murdered soul.

Our unseen dangers are most numerous. As sleeping passengers, we pass most dangers when we know it not. Peter had been in peril. He and the others had been in a big quarrel as to "who should be greatest." Christ perhaps was in prayer for them while they were in the quarrel about honors which were never to be. Most of our disharmonies arise from what we fancy or expect, but which never transpires. When we are fullest of worldly ways and ambitions, then are we in most danger from unseen powers of darkness. Had that quarrel been recorded, it would have made racy reading. Peter, I am sure, put his claim to promotion with emphasis, and had it been necessary would have made that emphasis more emphatic with his fist. And yet he learns afterward that at the moment he was urging his claim to office a hand—invisible, black, malignant—was fixing its clutch in his throat, and but for the Master's care and prayers would have wrought his ruin. How often, when ambition is highest and the blood hottest, the hand of the destroyer is nighest! Success has its unseen perils. Are you rising in power as never before? making money as never before? having success as never before? Remember, it was just when Peter thought he was about to become chief cabinet officer that the devil was planning his destruction.

2. *The conflict.* Christ and Satan are in conflict

over the soul of Peter. There are unseen battles fought over us when we know it not; and were Christ not engaged for us, we could not stand. He does not break the power of the enemy and thus deliver us. That would be saving us as babes are saved. He intends that we shall be saved as men—men who have the royal right of choice, men who stand for the right, heroes and conquerors with and for Christ.

“Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat.” It had not occurred to Peter that the devil had special yearning after him. We would tremble, many times, if we knew the Satanic desires for our ruin. Satan wanted his way with Peter that he might sift him—might shake him thoroughly, as he did Job, and see if he could shake him through the sieve with the cockle and the dirt. It was fearful, and would have been hopeless but for the counteracting power of the Saviour’s prayer. There is a mighty countervailing influence in prayer. The godless recognize this. The bronzed old pilot, when his vessel was caught in the fog near the pass between the rocks, and the fog suddenly lifted just enough and long enough for him to guide his boat through the pass, said solemnly: “Somebody on this boat has been praying.” It is a grand thing to have a mother, a wife, even a little child pray for you. But what is it to have him pray for you whose wounds and blood are eloquent with that power that veiled the sun and rent the rocks?

Railroad men have special sifting. Some say: “The railroads belong to the devil; and a man cannot be a railroad man and a Christian.” They say: “They have no Sunday, no church, no association helpful to

godliness." The devil very naturally sets his claim to the railroads. He knows the power they wield. He knows they are mighty instrumentalities for the advance of civilization. Hence he will take charge if he be allowed. If he told the Master that all the kingdoms of the earth were his, we need not wonder if he should claim the railroads. He will run them in his interests if possible. Where you pierce new territory with your lines, he will be on hand with his enterprises; where you build a station, he will plant a saloon and build a brothel; where you put a Bible in a coach-rack, he will put in a score of infidel books and yellow-backed filth; where you win one young man to Christ, he will try to persuade half a dozen to give up the religion of their childhood and enter upon fast and dissolute life. But press the battle on this line, as workers in the Young Men's Christian Association, and remember you have a solid ground of hope in these words: "I have prayed for thee." The divine solicitude and the prayer of Christ underlie your organization and the effort of every one trying to save men.

3. *The burden of the prayer.* "That thy faith fail not." There is a heroism in faith that laughs at impossibilities. It lets in a measure of the supernatural upon us in the trying junctures of life; it makes men do what they cannot explain in their cooler moments. Yonder Hebrew has slain his fellow, and is flying to the city of refuge. The avenger upon his track is gaining and pressing him hard. Every nerve and muscle are strained, and his strength is failing. The avenger is nearer, and escape seems impossible; yet his confidence holds, and he believes he

will reach the refuge. That confidence gives him superhuman power; the last leaps are made, the city gained, he is through the gate—*saved!* “His faith failed not.” While faith holds we make headway despite opposing forces. This was the prayer for Peter, that “his faith fail not.” When faith fails efforts cease; and the meanest thing that men or devils can do is to destroy the faith of a struggling soul. A man may make shipwreck of all, and be little damaged while his faith holds. It is this that allies him to God. When he has lost all, then faith gives him hold upon all that God has. Job lost all, but the destruction around him made his faith the grander. He went through the devil’s sieve, and, as it is now, there were hands enough (and, worst of all, his wife among them) to help the devil shake the sieve while Job was in it. But he came out “sifted but safe.” Peter’s sifting did him good. Fearful it was, but it brought him to know himself and his Master better. It was a pity that he did lie and swear, but Christ forgave him. Our siftings, terrible as they are, make the bone and muscle of Christian character and manhood.

The railroads are not his. He has no more right to them than he has to the schools or to the churches. But he claims all. He will take charge of the railroads, put the Bible out of the schools, run the State legislatures, the municipal councils, and all else, if he be only allowed. Railroads are God’s property. Not a foot of road-bed, not an iron rail, thundering engine, clattering wheel, ton of coal, or pound of steam in all the railroads on earth that God did not furnish. The devil never gave so much as a cross-tie, spike, or an

inch of steam to a railroad, and yet he would usurp and run the whole system in his interests. Then let the motto be: "*The Railroads for Christ.*" Press the battle until every official and employee shall come to God; until every man in the system shall have "Holiness unto the Lord" written upon his brow, and, like the engine's flashing head-light, be a flying and shining light through this world's darkness.

Their possibilities. They have revolutionized the practical economy of our land; they have relegated the stage and road-wagon to the lumber-loft of the past, and brought about a horse and mule millennium; they have grown to monopolies of such magnitude that the financial and political elements feel their force and respect their power. It now remains for them to touch and change the moral issues of the times. They can do more to settle the "Sabbath question" than any other power short of the ballot. Let the railroads be consecrated to God, and their moral power will surpass their physical and financial forces. If every office were closed on the Sabbath day, every engine silent, every car motionless, every brake idle, and the employees gathered at the places of worship, who could portray the effect? Soon every schedule in the land would be adjusted, and every traveler would adjust himself to the schedules. Sabbath silence would be no longer broken by the screams and groans of toiling locomotives; but every office, engine, and car would stand as a witness for God and his Sabbath. The very silence would impress the nation—a testimony before which blatant infidelity would stand abashed and speechless.

4. Peter, reclaimed, was mighty for God. Nobly

did he strengthen his brethren. A grander history is not made than that of this big-hearted, brawny son of nature, after his reclamation. This grand apostolic railroad man is a typical man in a double sense—type of railroad character and type of the railroad power for good. What reclaimed Peter was to the apostolate, the reclaimed railroad will be to the Church of God. God says to the railroad power of this land, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Give us the railroads for Christ. Let the thought prevail that the country's commerce is engineered by the "sons of God;" that every passenger is in the charge of a conductor and public servants who fear God; that every ticket has the gospel stamp upon it; that every grimy hand that grasps a throttle is a consecrated hand; that every eye looking through a midnight head-light has first looked up to God; every brakeman at his post, a hero of Christ.

Thus, with nearly 200,000 miles of road radiating from the great centers of wealth, thought, and influence, and penetrating town and territory at every point of the compass, each train a gospel light; and flying by thousands, as sensations over the human nerve lines, their thunder a gospel bass, whose answering echoes are the prelude to millennial triumph. "Peter strengthening his brethren;" the railroads helping the Church; lifting up the right; exalting the cross; hastening the conquest of the world.

Finally. Yours is a vast field; but the eye of the General Superintendent is upon you. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." With Christ lead-

ing, his prayers sustaining, and his promise to lure you on, your faith will not fail. Press the battle until Satan shall fly from the railroads as he did from the Lord after defeat; until every line shall be a gospel line; until the railroad power shall become "a power of God" for saving men; until the moral tendency and ultimate terminus of every line shall be the celestial city, where the gospel immigrants coming from every nation shall constitute the commonwealth of the redeemed.

M.

IV.

GLORYING IN THE CROSS.

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Galatians vi. 14.)

MAN is constitutionally inclined to glory in something. He boasts of his high birth, his great wealth, his superior attainments, or his extensive influence. To meet this constitutional principle God has presented to man an object worthy not only of his trust, but of his boast. He says to man: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” I hold that there is no discrepancy between Jeremiah and Paul. They express the same thoughts in different language. St. Paul might have boasted of a noble ancestry, of his Roman citizenship, of his finished education, and of his Church association; but he boasted of none of these things. He counted them all as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. He said: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1. The cross revealed more fully than men or angels had ever seen the character of God, and there-

fore he gloried in it. Not in all the dispensations of providence and of grace, for four thousand years, did the character of God shine forth as it did from the cross. When at the birth of creation the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, the character of God was but partially displayed. The morning of creation, blazing with light and shining in cloudless splendor, did not shed such luster upon the character of God as did the cross on which Jesus died. Creation exhibited his omnipotent power and his infinite wisdom; but the cross, all stained with hallowed blood, showed forth his boundless compassion and his eternal love. But at the same time justice, stern and inflexible, was made manifest, holding mercy by the hand and hushing the thunders of the law, and quenching its penal fires in the blood of the atonement. In no other work of God do all his attributes shine out and blend in such complete harmony as on the cross. In reference to all else we may say: "Lo, these are parts of his ways." On the cross his whole character is displayed in perfect fullness, like a full-orbed sun, its round of rays complete.

Here the whole Deity is known,
Nor dares a creature guess
Which of the glories brighter shone,
The justice or the grace.

Not all the stars that blaze on the curtain of night, not all the systems that move in harmony at the divine command, can shed such light upon the divine plan as does the little hill of Calvary, pressed by the cross and smoking with the blood of Jesus. We may well imagine, then, with what enthusiasm the great Apostle to the Gentiles exclaimed: "God

forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Nature discovered to him all the natural attributes of the Deity. He saw him shining in the sun and warming in his beams; he beheld him glowing in the stars and sparkling in their rays; he heard his voice in the thunder and saw the flash of his eye in the lightning; he looked upon him as with his mighty hands he upheaved the mountains and spread out the valleys, and he said in all this and in more than ten thousand other things, great and small: "I see the labor of his hands and the impress of his feet; I behold the wisdom that devises, the ubiquity that pervades, and the power that executes; but here on the cross, amid all its darkness, I see the great heart of God as it opens in love to embrace the world."

2. In the second place, the apostle gloried in the cross of Christ because it was the symbol of moral influence. It had power, but it was moral. Its power was and is to attract. It is the power which at last will subdue the world. Not by conquering armies, not by warlike navies, not by might—the might of great nations—but by the attractions of the cross will he draw all men to him. The cross is the great moral magnet which is to draw all men to him. It is the centripetal force which shall wheel the moral universe into its orbit and bring back the lost planet to its place. Its power comes over the chaos which sin hath wrought, like the voice of God falling upon the world when it was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Power always impresses the human mind. The power that carries the locomotive with its train of cars, freighted with

the products of every clime, startles all that are capable of thought or feeling. So are we moved by the power that launches the ship on the sea, or that drives it with almost incredible speed across the pathless ocean. Still more are we moved by that stupendous power that filled the archipelago of the skies with islands of light and beauty, and sent forth the planets like beautiful argosies in aerial voyages around the sun. But much as we may admire these displays of the great forces of steam or wind or gravitation; much as we admire that power which created the earth and hung out the planets and gave to all their laws and motions—much more do we admire the power that breathes upon the world the beauty of a new creation, and which will make all its mountains vocal with praise, all its valleys nestling with joy, and all its inhabitants gushing with love. Until the power of the cross was felt in heaven the very attributes of Deity seemed to be at war with each other. Justice contended with mercy, and truth shut out compassion, while omnipotence seemed hurrying to strike the terrible blow which justice demanded and mercy sought to avert. The cross reconciled the jarrings of heaven and left mercy weeping in the arms of justice, truth kissing compassion, and omnipotence calmed by the tenderness of love. Its words are as sweet as the songs of angels. God can be just and yet pardon the guilty. Planted upon the head of Satan, the cross fulfills the first promise of redemption, and gathers around it in rich and immortal array all the prophets and martyrs, who shout in triumph the work complete, the sacrifice sufficient, and man redeemed. Let us join the shout, and with all the radiant throng

cry: "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

3. The cross is the symbol of purity. It sustains the government of God. It leaves the divine throne untarnished; it fulfills the most rigorous demands of the law; it meets the claims of retributive justice; it pays what man owed and what justice demanded, and thus carries to its completion the covenant with Adam. All governmental requirements are acknowledged and satisfied at the foot of the cross. "God is pure," is proclaimed by every drop of blood which flowed from the veins of the Divine Victim, and are re-echoed by his dying words, "It is finished." But while the cross asserts the purity of God it offers purity to man. It is to cleanse from all sin. It is from the foot of the cross that the fountain gushes by which pollution is to be cleansed and sin forever washed away. As when Moses smote the rock of Horeb water gushed out in a stream sufficient to satisfy every want of the famishing Israelites, so when Christ was nailed to the cross, when the Rock of Ages was smitten by the rod of the law, there gushed out a stream deep enough and wide enough and pure enough to wash away the sins of the world and to present it once more to the sight of angels and of God shining with the divine image, pure as the unsoiled snow, and bright and happy as pure. Shall we not glory in purity? Shall we, can we glory in pride and folly, when not a stream but an ocean of purity bathes the foot of the cross and extends its peaceful waves to the ends of the world?

4. The cross is the symbol of redemption, and therefore Paul gloried in it. It enfranchises an en-

tire race; it brings life and immortality to light; it destroys the power of sin and takes away the bitterness of death; it solves the mystery of man's moral nature in ruins, and it rebuilds it upon a basis more solid, and with all its materials renewed, polished, and refined. Upon a world which sin had darkened and the law had cursed it pours a radiance brighter than the sun and bestows all the blessings of the gospel of peace. It gives light for darkness, innocence for guilt, purity for pollution, life for death, and heaven for hell. It changes the gloom of despair to the effulgence of hope, and converts the wails of grief to the melodies of rapture. It proclaims Jesus Christ the resurrection and the life, and declares that "who-soever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life;" and that even "though he were dead, yet shall he live." It employs all the wealth of nature, all the truths of science, and all the inventions of genius, and brings into requisition all of the institutions of philanthropy to remove from man the burdens which sin has imposed. It reveals the arm of God outstretched to save and the heart of God throbbing with compassion as boundless as it is tender. It proclaims the reign of sin but temporary, and the scepter of death broken. It announces the Child born and the Son given, and exhibits him, with an energy greater than Samson, bearing away the gates of death and pulling down the temple of sin. It shows him that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, marching to the conquest of the world. It points us to the Wonderful, Counsellor, mighty to save, stronger than the fabled Atlas, bearing upon his shoulders the government of the universe,

and offers to our contemplation an epic whose reality surpasses far the most exaggerated creation of the imagination and whose dramatic interest appals the mind and beggars human language. It offers to our faith the God-man, whose birth was a miracle, whose life was a perfect illustration of the highest wisdom and noblest philanthropy, and whose death was the most stupendous event that prophecy ever anticipated or history ever recorded. It opens to our hope the door of heaven and bids us enter in, in the assurance of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. It provides for our love an object of faultless beauty and spotless purity, and of such wide and tender sympathy as ought to awaken emotions in the coldest nature, and make a heart of adamant feel. It makes labor smile in the midst of its toils, and causes poverty to rejoice in its rags. It pours a divine radiance into the dreary dungeon where crime repents in solitude, and breathes the light of hope over the sad features of the dying malefactor. It feeds the hungry and clothes the naked; it visits the sick and ministers to the prisoners; it reforms the prodigal and pours its consolation into the bosom of the dying. It collects all the drops of mercy, and pours them out in such prolific showers as ought to make the wilderness and the solitary place glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. Coming down like rain upon the mown grass, these showers of mercy will after awhile clothe the earth with verdure, and impart to it a beauty surpassing that of Eden in all its pristine glory. Such is redemption, and the cross is its symbol. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

5. We should glory in the cross because it is the consecrated symbol of our holy religion; it is the sacred badge of Christianity. The cross embraces all that we mean by the religion of Christ. It is the sign of that religion and of no other. When the apostle gloried in the cross of Christ he gloried in the religion of the humble Nazarene. It was not in a piece of wood or ivory or pearl that he gloried, but he went beyond the material to the spiritual, beyond the sign to the thing signified. There is no virtue in a cross which may hang about your neck or shine upon your bosom, but there is virtue in the religion which warms the heart, shines upon the face, and illustrates the whole life. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether we consider it in its origin or its end, in its principles or its practice, in its sublime utterances, or in its exalting and saving power, is worthy the heart of individuals and of nations. It is the life of our civilization and the hope of our progress. It is the basis of all good government and the only assurance of its permanence. It satisfies the desires of the individual, and meets all the wants of society. It conducts business upon legitimate principles, and acquires wealth by honest industry, prudent sagacity, and wise frugality. It fosters learning, diffuses education, and builds up institutions for the advancement of science. It requires justice and encourages benevolence. It gives honor and dignity to man, and incorruptible purity to woman. It blesses marriage and makes home attractive. It unites parents and children by ties so strong that no violence can ever break them, and no length of time can wear or weaken them. It adds a charm to the domestic circle which neither

wealth, position, nor intelligence can impart. It brightens the face of youth and smooths the brow of age. When unable to remove or avert the clouds that so often darken earth, it always spans them with the bow of promise, which assures of cloudless sunshine beyond. It lessens the horrors of war, and multiplies the hopes and joys of peace. It diminishes all the evils of life, takes away the sting of death, and robs the grave of its gloom. It is as important to man universal as the compass to the mariner, as the sun to the traveler, as skill to the physician, as food to the hungry, or as water to the thirsty. It is the only assurance of a life of rectitude, and the only certainty of a death of triumph. Its light is the light of an unsetting sun, and its joy flows from a perennial and inexhaustible fountain. Its perpetuity can never be imperiled by the mutations of time, and its luster can never be dimmed by the long and dark night of sin. It is the pearl of great price—a gem of purest ray serene, whose worth no arithmetic can calculate and no language express. Glory in it; make it your boast; count all things but loss for its excellency. It will give you admission to the skies. It will make you welcome to the society of the blest. It will constitute your rejoicing along all the ages to come. Make the cross the subject of your thoughts, the object of your devotion, the theme of your conversation, the very foundation of character, of hope, and of happiness. Build upon this foundation, and no fury of the storm can ever move you. I urge you to stand by the cross. Glory in it, and in nothing else but the cross. Be bold to take it up and firm to sustain it. Let not wealth allure nor pleas-

ures entice nor honors tempt nor fears dismay, but stand to your colors and glory in the cross. It may seem barren now, but it will bud and blossom in your hands, and its amaranthine flowers will sweeten the atmosphere of heaven and regale your senses forever. Let no opposition discourage you and no enemies alarm you. Be brave. Be true.

Some of you have just bowed to the cross, and will to-day take upon you the vows of the Church. Remember that no Christian soldier was ever defeated while standing by the cross. Life is a battle, and in this sign alone you can conquer. It will crucify you to the world, and will crucify the world to you. Aided by its purity and sustained by its power, you *can* and you will keep the vows which you do now take, to renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that you will not follow or be led by them. With these vows upon you and heaven just before you, continue to glory in the cross until you receive the crown. R.

V.

SIGNS OF RAIN.

“Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand.” (1 Kings xviii. 44.)

SAMARIA was in famine: protracted, fearful, desolating. Men and beasts were dying on every hand, and the unburied dead lay decomposing everywhere. The king, in distress, orders his servants to hunt out the fountains and water-brooks of the land—dried up, but peradventure there might be found remaining moisture to give grass enough to keep some of the stock alive.

1. *Rain was the one necessity.* This one transcended all other needs with that people. A thousand other things needful to them, as to us; but the one all-comprehending necessity was *rain*. Comfort, happiness, life itself—all involved in the probabilities of rain. They have seen the animal and vegetable kingdoms perish; and now they feel their own strength failing, while their children are growing wan and feeble from want of food. No word can paint necessity so deep and strong and fearful as that word “*famine*.” It combines all horrors in forms most horrible. May it never come to our borders! May the God of a gracious providence never permit gaunt hunger to stalk, specter-like, in our midst, claiming our loved ones as his victims and our land as his heritage!

2. *The desire for rain was strong and general.* The

anxious king, the failing inhabitants, hopeless parents, starving children, famishing nature—all looked longingly heavenward for rain. As the famine consumed the land, so the one desire consumed every heart, and the soul of Samaria went up in anguished accents of pleading for rain. It was the one blessing that included all others needful. With the coming of rain would be the return of life and hope and song. The rills would ripple and laugh again, vegetation revive, grasses spring, flowers bloom, fruits ripen, harvests wave, and gladness come again to the dying land.

Carry the figure up into the higher sphere, and the Holy Spirit corresponds to the rain in famine. Sin has been the blight of humanity through the ages. It rests upon all lands. Men are found everywhere famishing in their higher being; “fat and flourishing” in their temporal and lower being, but “dying at the top;” blighted, withered, lifeless in their higher and immortal nature.

It would be sad to see one starving in our city. The whole city would be moved. Let a family be in sore need, and the morning paper will carry the news to ten thousand homes, and before night-fall their wants are kindly and bountifully met. Still there are cases of spiritual starvation in your city—men who have suffered under the blight of sin until their very souls have shriveled within them; men who have well-nigh succumbed to the benumbing influence of sin, and will ere long lie down in death, and that death the doorway of despair.

The Church likewise is losing, in some sense, her “sensibility of sin.” There is a familiarity upon her

part with the world that augurs ill. The higher spiritual states are sensitive to the world's approaches, and the distance between the world and the Church is governed by the measure of divine influence that is upon the Church. As the warm breath from the south will lift the mercury to the higher degrees, so the breathing of the Holy Ghost upon the Church raises it to the higher religious spheres.

3. *Then the chief need is the Holy Ghost.* Samaria-like, we need a thousand things; but the prime and all-inclusive necessity is "rain;" "refreshing from on high," that power of the Holy Ghost that revives and imparts new life. As a growing city (Atlanta, Ga.) we need the manufacturers' associations, the school of technology, the land improvement companies, Belgian streets, dummy lines, and a thousand other things. But in the higher sphere, and above all and supremely, we need the power of God upon the people. No city is safe very long when running its material success beyond its moral and spiritual. Like the warning voice from the tomb of Achilles, Nineveh, Babylon, and other historic cities call to us from their ruins, warning of prosperity's dangers. Give us all the improvements and added agencies that will make our city strong and great; but let us not go forward without the cloud of the divine presence in front.

Revival, like the rain, involves all. Give us the rain, and the grasses, flowers, fruits, and foliage will come of themselves. If the rain but come, there will be the hum of bees amid the flowers, the warbling of birds among the branches, the plowman's whistle in the fields, and the laugh of merry childhood in the

orchard and the meadow. All goes well if we do but have the rain. Give us "refreshing from on high," and the joys come to the Church of themselves. There is a sense of satisfaction everywhere: preacher satisfied, people satisfied, officers, members, everybody satisfied. Joys spring as morning-glories after the rain. The people sing in church, talk in the experience meeting, and sometimes shout God's praise in the "great congregation." Every thing full, like the gulches after the rain; church full, prayer-meeting full, Sunday-school full—a time of general fullness. When heaven pours itself out upon the earth things get full and run over, whether they be things material or things spiritual.

4. *Revival always draws.* A famine is a poor thing to draw. I have never read of a country in famine that was crowded with immigrants. In place of flocking to such a land, the people will flock out of it as fast as possible. There was a famine in Canaan, and the Patriarch Jacob, with as much state pride as an autocrat of the "Old Dominion," took his family and went down to live among a heathen people, because they had provisions there. And it is so now. Let there be famine in the Church, and the very patriarchs are ready to take their families and go out and make terms with the Egyptians. In proportion as the revival rains cease in the Church, you will see its members moving toward Egypt. But give us rain from heaven, and every man's back is turned against Egypt; everybody takes a new start for the highlands of Canaan. Then your Church draws—draws men out of their indifference and out of their sordid worldliness, out of bestiality, and out of the sinks of iniqui-

ty. Even the old "stand-by's" of the devil, soaked and absolutely pickled in sin, and who have not entered a church for twenty years, all alike are drawn to the Church. And why? Because there is rain from heaven, food there from heaven, God himself there; and God in the Church will outdraw all the inventions of the age. Fine music from the loft and fine rhetoric from the desk are alike pleasant; but that element which comes to the house of God for such entertainment alone will be the first to leave you when the entertainment shall cloy but a little. They are not of those who hunger for the true bread.

5. *How it adjusts things.* Let an old wind-mill get dry in its joints and the oiling be neglected, and every breeze will get a groan out of it. Its midnight creaking and complaining will keep the whole neighborhood awake. How often have you been haunted and harrowed in the night hours by the miseries of your neighbor's wind-mill, and he in turn by yours! Let a man's soul get a little dry, and its joints begin to suffer for the heavenly anointing, and every breeze will produce a groan. Like the dry wind-mill, the community will soon hear from him, and that in the most doleful accents; and if this dryness become prevalent, then there is pandemonium of complaining that is apt to drive out even peace from Zion. But let the revival come—the divine anointing—and there is a "great calm;" not a groan, not a complaint, not a sensitive member, not a sore spot in all the Church, not so much as a midnight moan from a single wind-mill. Let the rain descend upon Zion, and all questions of Church economy settle themselves, differences subside, and "brethren dwell together in unity."

6. *There must be faith to bring revival.* Elijah was in communion with God. This was his normal state; and though there has been no rain for so long and no sign of rain now, yet he has reached rain by his faith. Faith is that "sixth sense" by which we see the "unseen." Elijah's faith heard the coming rain; and he said to the king: "Get up and eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain." His faith reached the rain long before the rain reached Samaria. It was detected when as yet there was no visible sign of its coming. There must be faith somewhere to reach a revival before it will reach the Church. Preacher, officer, member—some one must be near enough to God and have faith enough to reach it independently of indications. There is always some one to hear the sound of the rain before the cloud is in view. We have heard this mysterious, unmistakable sound before the coming flood of grace. But it was when we were near to God, strong in faith, and "listening to hear what God the Lord would speak."

And what is it to listen? To hear the telephonic message you close the doors and shut out all other sounds, command the children to silence, and lend your whole attention to catch the far-off utterance. This is what it is to listen to the voice of God. It is to shut out earth and self and sin, and bid all else "be still;" and in the "holy hush" we catch the voice of God.

7. *We detect rain in the atmosphere.* There are atmospheric phases that tell us of its coming. There is a softening and stilling of the air—a cessation of movement, while distant sounds become strangely dis-

tinged. Then we say, "There will be rain." The sky "red and lowering," the watery haze that causes the sun to seem as if wading deeply; the tree-frogs croak at "stilly night;" the rain-crow's midday note—these are signs that meet the eye and ear, and tell us of the coming rain. So there are premonitions of refreshing from God: a solemn and unusual interest on the part of the unsaved; men begin to think, to inquire, and to wish to talk on spiritual themes; they become approachable and anxious on this subject; there is a softening of the spiritual atmosphere. There are also certain characters who get very pliable at such a time, and yet hold to their sins; do not quite surrender. Thus affected at every revival, they are a sort of spiritual rain-crow. They seem to know the signs and feel the influences; but, like that remarkable bird often heard but never captured, when the "rain is over and gone" they are gone also, and you hear no more of them until the next revival season. There are men who are thus periodically convicted and are periodically on the point of giving themselves to God, and yet they pass through and pass out of life in their sins.

8. *The effect of these tokens.* One might think the prophet done with praying when his faith had reached the rain. No use to pray, now that he has a faith-hearing of its coming. But not so. He followed up his faith with the most importunate prayer. He went up to the top of Carmel, where God had shown his power, and there cast himself upon the earth and put his face between his knees and continued in prayer, causing his servant to watch, and go again and again and look toward the sea. And, though the servant

saw nothing but brassy skies and a sunburnt earth, still the prophet prayed on; and at the seventh going the servant said: "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." Then he arose and bade the servant go tell the king to make ready his chariot and drive toward the city before he shall be cut off by the floods of rain. He prayed until the cloud came in sight; then he ran before the king and before the roaring rain-flood, and came to the city.

Faith prays until the blessing comes. It does not rest in signs or sounds, but cries to God until it has what it wants. Signs in nature fail. The rain-cloud may be coming and in full view, but some counter-current may strike and change its course, and turn its blessings elsewhere. Hence Elijah continues to pray. He will turn back the currents and change the opposing forces and pioneer the way for that cloud by the power of prayer, and will not yield his place until forced to get out of the way of the floods. This is the true philosophy. Live up in the high, clear atmosphere, and listen until you catch the "sound of abundance of rain"—until you feel that God is coming with revival power. Then begin to pray as you never prayed, and continue until the cloud is in sight. We have heard the sound, seen all the indications, and known that revival was nigh; and even then we have known the "Prince of the power of the air" to dash in some counter-current, and dissolve and disperse and cause the occasion to pass as a wind-cloud in time of a drought; and no soul was watered, and the Church remained unrefreshed. How often have we seen and felt the disappointment! If there is ever a time when Zion should be prostrate

and her face between her knees—if ever a time for continued and earnest prayer—it is when God is about to send refreshing from his presence.

9. *Looking toward the sea.* The prophet had his servant continue looking toward the sea. Out of the sea he expected the cloud. That scene on Carmel's summit: Elijah on his face in prayer, the servant on watch, and straining his eyes out over the sea to catch sight of the prayed for but unseen cloud—that is the Church praying and looking for revival. Divine grace is the fathomless sea out of which it shall come. Let the Church, in prayer, look toward this sea until she beholds the "cloud like a man's hand." Then will refreshing come. All the accumulated dust and *debris* were washed from Samaria's surface in an hour, and the land was a picture of cleanness and purity.

May God only give us the rain—spiritual refreshing! Then shall the Church be cleansed and quickened; the sinks of sin and places of iniquity among the ungodly shall be purified; the moral air of our city shall be rarified and sweetened; and the people shall rejoice as a famished land after the rain.

M.

VI.

SAMSON AND THE LION.

"And, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid." (Judges xiv. 5, 6.)

SUCH is the narrative of the victory won by Samson over the young lion that roared against him as he was on his way to secure the hand of the woman whom God had intended him to have as a wife. It is given to teach us how to meet the spiritual lions that are constantly roaring in the path of duty, and are sure, if not resisted, to destroy our spiritual life. As a Christian starts out to discharge duty he is often met by sloth. This is indeed a roaring lion. It is the enemy of man and the foe to the discharge of all duty. It solicits to ease and invites to slumber. Opposed to all Christian work, sloth closes the eyes in sleep when they should be open to the beauties of nature, to the wisdom which shines in the rising sun or the opening flowers, or indeed to the wisdom, purity, and truth found in the inspired word of God. Sloth darkens the intellect, sears the conscience, benumbs the sensibilities, and enslaves the will. It is a monster which must not be allowed to interfere with the work of religion. It is hideous, and its roar is death. It must be met with courage, and destroyed without mercy. By the power which the Holy Spirit imparts sloth must be rent asunder as a strong man

would rend a kid. We must meet sloth as Samson met the young lion that roared against him, or every power of the immortal nature will be conquered by an enemy opposed to all culture and the implacable foe of all progress.

Then the Christian is often met by pride. Pride and piety cannot live in the same heart. They are as incompatible as light and darkness or as virtue and vice. No heart filled with pride can cultivate the highest virtues. It is pharisaical; it is pompous; it is exclusive; it is detestable. It must be throttled with the courage of a Samson throttling the young lion that roared against him. Pride brought down Lucifer, the son of the morning, the brightest star in the moral sky, and left him without light and destitute of all virtue. It would dethrone Deity and assume his place. It scorns the true and the good, and enthrones the degraded and the low; it deifies self and worships it with an Eastern devotion; it exalts itself above all that is called God. It must be met with the courage that quails at no danger and that becomes more defiant the greater the opposition. No Christian must yield to this dangerous foe. Let each one go forth armed with the whole armor of God, and oppose pride with humility and sloth with industry, until both die the death that has no hope of a resurrection.

Sensual pleasure is a roaring lion going forth to devour all the young people of the Christian Church. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ allows all that is innocent in human enjoyment; it opposes only those sinful pleasures whose tendency is to degrade and to ruin. It admits no compromise; it allows no

corrupt indulgence. It is pure as the unsoiled snow. It forbids nothing which is compatible with purity, nothing which does not vitiate the taste, corrupt the principles, inflame the passions, or enslave the soul. It seeks to confer the highest happiness of which man is capable. But all along the path of social life this young lion of sensual pleasure comes forth to turn the feet into paths which lead to death. In the licentious dance, in the pleasures found in games of chance, in the flowing bowl, in all the unlawful pleasures of appetite, this hungry lion is seen, and his roar is heard as he comes forth to scatter, tear, and slay. To be a Christian one must not listen to the enticing calls of sinful pleasures. He must close his eyes to all that would inflame unholy passions; he must shut out every sound which would invite to self-indulgence; he must call for the Spirit of God, and with the strength which that Spirit gives, and gives mightily, he must overcome all roaring lions which invite to pleasures at once sinful and degrading.

Covetousness is another roaring lion which banishes charity and turns the heart to stone. It comes up whenever and wherever duty calls to the discharge of benevolent action. It forbids donations to all benevolent objects. It says, let the heathen die in utter ignorance of God and heaven, let the poor starve, let the young go uneducated, and the ignorant be uninstructed; let money be hoarded and wealth heaped up, at whatever cost of principle or sacrifice of poor, suffering humanity. It lives by theft and flourishes by fraud. It makes the heart as hard as the nether millstone. It is as destitute of noble qualities as the desert is of flowers, and as barren of all virtue as the

mountain covered with perpetual snow is destitute of waving fields of corn or gardens of vegetables. It is colder than ice and harder than stone. In its presence philanthropy dies and humanity is stripped of every virtue. It incites to robbery and murder; it opens the gamblers' hell and fills it with the miserable worshipers of Pluto. It would rob the dead, and would take from those perishing in want their last crumb of bread. A bar of steel would as readily respond to the cry of want or woe as would a heart from which every noble feeling has been frozen out by covetousness. It is as unmerciful as Satan, and as destructive as Apollyon. O let it be slain! It is a lion whose roar should determine that it be rent asunder by the Christian upon whom the Spirit of God rests mightily. Potent as is this lion, it has been often subdued by the earnest Christian as he went forth to duty—the duty of sweet charity; and it has been done, and well done.

Then anger is a dreadful lion, often rising up to obstruct the path of duty. It is rough and violent; it often fires the soul to some terrible deed. It is cruel and often bloodthirsty; it produces a storm at once violent and disgraceful, and separates brothers and sisters, and, alas! sometimes husbands and wives. It is fierce as a tiger; it is revengeful as Cain seeking the death of the righteous Abel; it is death to all the finer feelings, and breaks down all holy resolves. It must be conquered; it must not be allowed any place in the Christian bosom; its fearful threats must be hushed ere they mature. It is the prolific source of all strife; it separated Jacob and Esau. It nerved the arm of Cain to lift the deadly club and to bring

it down with murderous violence upon the head of the innocent Abel. It looses the tongue with vindictive threats, and loads the pistol with murderous intent; it sends a challenge to deadly combat, and rests not until vengeance is satisfied with the murder of the foe. In its presence justice has no power, and the ties of kindred are without influence.

The only safe rule for the Christian is to silence its roar by the mighty power which the Spirit of God imparts. Call for this Spirit, and when it rests mightily upon you, then rend this raging lion with a power which that Spirit always imparts. So, when envy would despoil the heart of every noble impulse, let it be silenced forever by the mighty power of Almighty God.

But we cannot enumerate the many and fierce lions which roar along the path of Christian duty. Whatever interferes with Christian obligation may be called a lion because its roar is designed to silence the voice of conscience and frighten the young Samson from the divine errand upon which God sends him. The great moral of the narrative is: Call upon God until he mightily imbues you with his Spirit, and then conquer the foe. Depend not on self, but on him whose mighty power can conquer all the devils in hell. Look aloft; ask divine aid; seek help from on high; seize the foe with the relentless power of the young hero in the text who rent the lion as he would have rent a kid, and did it because the Spirit of God came mightily upon him. Depend not upon human strength; lean not to thine own understanding. Seek the might which God imparts to the inner man. With this you can conquer, and leave the foe prostrate and helpless on the field.

R.

VII.

THE SNARE.*

"Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler."
(Ps. xci. 3.)

1. *Satan is here termed the fowler.* A fowler, proper, is not the man who takes a day in a season for sport and recreation in the fields, as a sort of relief from the weary routine of daily work, but the man who gives his whole time and thought to this occupation, and makes it the business of life. The devil has but one business: his one work is to ensnare humanity. If he ever followed another calling, there is no record of the fact. He set his snare first, and with success, amid the beauties of paradise. There he fatally entrapped the artless head of our race, and with nets and gins and snares he pursues their fallen brood to this hour. Like the skilled hunter, he delights to go where the game is abundant. Hence he gives special attention to the cities, where multitudes are gathered within small compass. The cities are his special fowling places, the *habitat* of every species of humanity, the places where social evils and commercial evils and political evils incubate and fledge and flourish. The young man coming from simple life in his country home to the city leaves one danger to encounter a thousand.

*A sermon delivered to the young men of Atlanta, Ga.

2. *The young are in special danger of the snare.* The boy just entering upon city life can but be verdant. He has had no chance to see and know the world. He is often the butt and laughing-stock of those who have been city-raised, and hence are up to the fast city life. They sometimes enjoy what they term "rubbing the green off" the artless country youth; and yet they, perhaps, would be as green in the country as he in the city. It is the young fish that takes the bait, the young rat that gets into the trap, the young birds that go first into the net. The time when the young man comes to the city is the critical time in his history. It is a transition period—the hopeful, the poetic, the unsuspecting age with him. He never needed his parents more than just at the time he leaves them. Verdant, unsuspecting, and easily influenced, a bad man may get his confidence and lead him where he will. Cut off from home influences; hard-worked through the day; without association during Sundays and evenings in the week; a thousand places open for amusement; drinking, gaming, and dissipation; Church-membership at the old home church where he was converted and baptized; no ties or props to stay him in right life—is it any wonder that the young man finds his way into such places as lead him from God and a holy life? any wonder that "a thousand young men are counted at the bar-rooms where a hundred are found in the mid-week prayer-meetings?"

How I deplore this state of things! and gladly would I change it. Could these young men see some of the letters that come to us (as pastors) from their mothers (some of them widows), telling us where to

find their boys, pleading with us to "try to guard and shield them from the snares;" some of the letters marked with tear-drops where a mother's solicitude fell in briny solution upon the nervous writing, and closing with the words, "Don't let him know that I wrote you;" some of them in despair over sons already fallen and sinking in ruin—could they read these letters, they would certainly and forever forsake the haunts of vice and ruin.

3. *The snare is skillfully set.* The artful fowler sets his snare with a skill so delicate that its very existence is not presumed. It is colored or covered until it seems a part of the very ground on which it rests, and its presence is not suspected until the unwary bird is inclosed in its meshes. No hunter ever had such skill as he whose business it is to ensnare souls. He will set the snare right in the home; and of course there can be no danger there. The cards are brought out to while away the long evening hours; the family join in the game; and who can say there is danger here? The wine is placed on the table, and all partake; and surely there can be no harm in this in the home circle. Thus the home and the table become as snares. The taste for intoxicants is formed at home; the lad becomes expert with cards, and goes out into young life educated for gambling, while parents in later years mourn the ruin and downfall of their sons, whose ruin began under their own eyes and approbation, in their own home.

Gamblers' cards, that adorn the tables in the vile dens of infamy and are the special property of the low and the vulgar, are not things proper for the center-table of a refined and cultured home. They are

unfit for the pure hands of refined womanhood; they are black and fearful in their history. They have ever gone hand in hand with the whisky-flask, the revolver, and the dirk; blood and ruin and broken hearts have marked their work in the hands of the godless and the unscrupulous.

Another snare is the upper-room, where a band of chums meet on Sunday evenings and nights to read, tell stories, smoke, and take their light wines. The best blood of the city is found here. And even the drinking saloons (many of them) are quietly and orderly kept, with flowers and music, and attended by the first young men of the city. "So a saloon is not such a bad thing after all." And yet these harmless things, these attractive things, are the well-covered snares by which thousands are drawn into destruction.

4. *Satan likes his game in flocks.* You well remember the old-fashioned bird-net used by the gentry of *ante-bellum* days. They would go to the fields, locate the covey, set the net, and drive in the entire flock. Satan prefers the wholesale business; hence he takes men by flocks, companies, clubs, circles, and rings. The social element in men instinctively organizes them together. There is an organizing instinct. "Birds of a feather flock together:" quails with quails, and crows with crows. In every community men fall into circles. They can't tell why; but finding themselves congenial, they soon become necessary to each other. "They do not have any charter or legislative recognition, but by the organizing instinct of the social nature they come together, and their union is as the harmony of a choir." There are such

circles in this city, and the devil has trapped the whole flock in many cases. And if a member of such a circle is moved of God to a higher life, he is held back by the power of this association. His regard for his fellows will prevent him beginning a better life, however strong the impulse may be in that direction. Where men are banded together in this manner, and one draws out, the harmony is broken and the music is no longer perfect. Besides, it breaks the social compact. If he goes out he goes with full knowledge of their manner of life, and they are uncomfortable in the knowledge that there is one who knows them and yet is no longer one with them. Hence they will, if possible, prevent his escape from their "charmed circle." There is too a sort of manhood which says: "Right or wrong, I will not forsake my comrades;" and multitudes go down to ruin on this false notion of honor.

5. *Satan succeeds at certain periods.* The old hunters preferred the cloudy, damp, and misty day. If the day were bright and the air crisp, there was little success; the birds would take wing and leave the net. But if the day were dark and the atmosphere heavy, they were slow to fly and easily taken.

The great soul-fowler knows his time. When the spiritual elements are clear and the atmosphere full of a divine influence; when the Church is unclouded, "bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners;" this is the season when men keep aloof from his snares. But when the Church retrogrades, when the spiritual air thickens, when the misty-day period comes, then he gathers richly. Souls, then, are not so much on wing; but, like the

birds on a heavy day, they stick closer to the earth, and the devil succeeds wonderfully with his snares.

Again. He is *gentle and patient*. I have seen the old bird-hunter spend hours quietly moving back and forth, turning the course of the covey in order to inclose them. Never in a rush, never hasty, never impatient; always pacific and gentle, but his net well set, and every movement smooth and proper. No being can practice the virtues to greater perfection than Satan when he would entrap a soul. His game is momentous, and he can afford to be patient. He works with some souls half a life-time before getting them fairly into his meshes. If a young man takes a gospel fright, and escapes from the influences which allure him to ruin, the wise old enemy doesn't pursue him and make a great racket to drive him farther and farther and frighten his associates, but he wisely lets him go for a time. I have seen a covey flushed and scattered, and one bird flew a long way, as if it would clear all danger, taking refuge beyond a hedge or fence-row. But the expert sportsman spotted it, and in an hour afterward was again in pursuit. A man may be awakened and turn away from sin, go into the Church, and so hide himself away as to feel safe, but the devil has him spotted and is soon on his track. Some hear me now who once thought they were safe, but now are hard pressed by the enemy.

6. *His success is great.* His snares are so numerous, so artfully set, and so variedly baited, that his success is fearful. Those whom he cannot ensnare with one influence he plies with another. He baits with bar-rooms, social clubs, gambling hells, and other like orders of influence. But there are some

fish you cannot catch with grubs. There are young men whom Satan cannot entice with this manner of bait. So he takes them with another kind; he catches some with their own *pride of intellect*. A young man says: "While I don't believe in your Christ and your religion, yet I am not going to be found in the places of common debauch." All right; that suits the devil just as well, for he has as many on the other line as he can well manage, anyway. So he takes that young man on his theology. He gets him to think the Church fanatical, the gospel a sort of legend; and as a "thinking" (?) young man he cannot accept the Christian religion. Young men here in your city, in the midst of your churches, smile at the idea of their mothers' religion. That is all the devil wants. He had as soon have a youth fresh out of a Christian home, and baptized with a mother's prayers and tears, as to have him from out a rum-hole or a brothel.

Again. He catches others on their *respectability*. This is fine bait; the very word has a sort of tony and "upper-tendom" sound. A young man says: "I am no Christian; don't know that I ever will be; but I am a gentleman." And what is a gentleman? He is a man who behaves himself, stands on the high points, does the honorable, defends "his honor," even if he has to go out of the State to do it; in a word, *he is a gentleman*. All honor to a gentleman! But what does this avail when God requires full development of the moral being and nature? "If a man have a finely developed foot or nose, while the other portions of his body are undeveloped, he will not answer for a perfect man." So with a gentleman who is at the same time enslaved to pride, ambition, avarice, or

lust. Every man ought to be a gentleman. But to stop at that is to be lost; the devil had as soon have a gentleman as a knave.

Again. Others are taken on *some special sin*. There is a man who desires to be saved, might be saved, but he is under the dominion of some special sin. He can give up all else with little difficulty but that one appetite, indulgence, an unholy thing; that is dearer than life; that restrains him.

"A captive eagle had about one foot a tiny chain. He had been a long time in captivity. He would sit sullen and dreamily, when suddenly, with an impulse toward his own higher realm, he would arouse and spread his great wings and make an upward movement, only to be drawn back by his chain."

How often is the soul moved, like the rousing eagle, with an upward and noble impulse, resolves, makes feeble effort, and is drawn back by the subtle power of some secret sin! One chain enough for the eagle; one silken sin, one sweet idol, and the soul is a hopeless captive.

7. *God is the only Deliverer.* He is the only Being in the universe who is wiser and mightier than Satan, hence the only Being capable of overcoming him. The combined wisdom of the philosophers is ineffective in conflict with him; there is no success against him except we be in league with God. But when the soul is in league with him the arch-enemy is powerless against it. Daniel was in league with God when he spent the night among the lions; Paul, when he went "bound to Jerusalem;" Luther, when he went to the Diet at Worms. Let a man be in league with him, and perils are only pastimes, and

dangers are but recreations. Let a young man put his hand in God's hand, and he can walk safely in Atlanta, New York, or London—safe, though the snares be on every corner, and devils thick as mosquitoes in summer air. Only let the dear old folks at home (who loved you first, last, and all the time) know that you are in partnership with the living God, and the gray-haired father and mother will sing in the day-time and dream sweet dreams of their boy at night.

Finally. Take ground now.

“There is a tide in the affairs of men

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.”

This is as true in religion as in life. And the gracetides come in in the morning and go out in the afternoon. Young life is full of high impulse. It is easy for the youth to come to God, but the man in life's afternoon seldom comes; the tide has gone out, and he simply picks a few shells from the barren shores of his lost opportunities. It is pleasant to see the little child gathering shells; but sad is it to see the old man, in the evening of life, trying to satisfy his soul with the *debris* which life and its chances have left.

Desires die. Young man, take ground; don't speculate and quibble until your enthusiasm has leaked out and your high impulses have died. I know men who were once on a flood of feeling and desire; they might easily have rowed out into the mighty deep of salvation; they were well-nigh swept out into the ocean of divine life. Now they have lost feeling and interest, and care little for such things. Take ground to-day! Come into covenant with Him who is pledged

to "deliver thee from the snare of the fowler." Make life a success. Let its morning be such that its night-fall, like the ladder of Jacob, shall rest against heaven. Let life's close be as the radiant sunset whose glory lingers long into the night.

VIII.

THE SHORT BED AND NARROW COVERING.*

“For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” (Isaiah xxviii. 20.)

MAN is universally seeking after something that will give him satisfaction. Especially does he seek to be satisfied when he turns to any religious subject. The prophet describes those who, instead of seeking first the truth in reference to duty, to religion, to God, and to eternity, have made a covenant with death and with hell, and have rejected the chief corner-stone, the sure foundation laid in Zion, and have sought for themselves a refuge of lies. This refuge was to be swept away, and the covenant with death and the agreement with hell were to be swept away; “for the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.”

This text teaches that the rejection of Christ and his religion is to make a covenant with death and an agreement with hell. It is to seek satisfaction when weary and worn that a man attempts to find repose on his couch. He wants a pleasant bed on which to

*Preached in Greenville, Ala., shortly after the death of a beloved daughter. A great many people refused to come to the church, and this, with other sermons, was preached at the court-house on a Sabbath afternoon.

rest, and if the weather is cold, he wants abundant covering. If, however, he is compelled to lie down on a bed too short, and to have narrow and insufficient covering, then indeed he is far from finding satisfaction. Instead of enjoying sweet repose he is restless and dissatisfied. Such is the figure employed to illustrate the restlessness of any one seeking rest or satisfaction in infidelity.

So it will be my duty, as it is certainly my fervent wish, to prove that infidelity in all its forms is as unsatisfying to rational man as is the short bed or narrow covering to one wearied with the labors and cares of life.

1. The human mind seeks truth, but infidelity does not give the least evidence by which any impartial mind can accept it as true. Not a rock or fossil has ever given evidence that there is no God. For all the researches of the geologist, there is not found the least evidence of the truth of the theory of evolution. The fact is that all observation, and indeed all history, teach that no evolution can take place without culture. Take the finest cotton, and it will deteriorate if there be no cultivation. The finest garden vegetables, instead of improvement, always become less perfect when tended by no skillful hand. So it is with all the animal creation. Man himself will go back to barbarism if he be not subjected to constant culture.

In addition to this necessity of culture in order to evolution there arises another great and well-known truth against all the assumptions of the agnostic and the impudent rejection of Deity by the infidel. It is this: No possible culture has ever been able to

change the species. Cultivate the plant or animal as you will, and it remains the same, although highly improved. There never was evolution of life from dead matter. Tyndall himself, after the most elaborate experiments, confesses that life cannot be evolved from dead matter without the interposition of the living germ. He tried it with all the skill of the most experienced scientists, and his failure was such that he declared the impossibility of such evolution.

The testimony of real science is against atheism. It is the fool who hath said in his heart (not ever with his demented intellect), there is no God. It is a falsehood and sham, as foolish as false; it is a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell. It is as unsatisfying to the intellect seeking for truth as a bed too short and with covering too narrow is to a body worn with labor and shivering with cold.

2. Infidelity has no consistency, no harmony, and cannot be true. One declares there is no God, and another maintains the existence of God, but denies the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and especially rejects the Divine Man. Such is the deist. Then the agnostic knows nothing and believes nothing. Thus a system without harmony is of necessity false, for truth is always harmonious. Proclaiming itself the friend of man, it robs him of his glory, denies his divine origin, and makes him the descendant of the ape and the twin brother of the gorilla. Yes, it sends immortal man to the wilds of the West, to the menagerie, or the zoological garden to search his ancestry. Surely such a system, ignoring God and degrading man, cannot be true. It is as unsatisfying to the inquiring or truth-loving man as husks to the

hungry or dry sand to the thirsty. The bed is too short and the covering is too narrow.

3. Infidelity as a system can give no moral law—no rule for moral conduct—because it has no authority to bind man to obey any rule given or any law prescribed. Law is the will of the superior and binding upon the inferior; but in this system one man has as much right to give law or prescribe a code of morals as another. It is true that infidelity has never done much in this line, and all that it has done is entirely without authority and destitute of binding force.

4. It offers no incentive to virtue, and raises no barrier to vice. The consequence is that it promotes neither morality nor virtue. A pious infidel would excite universal admiration. He would be counted as one of the wonders of the world. He would be a greater show than Tom Thumb or the Siamese twins. It was once proclaimed as the religion of France, and then indeed the heavens were hung in black, and the earth was covered with a pall of gloom as dark as crime could make. The streets of Paris ran with human blood, while her noblest and best citizens were sacrificed on the horrible guillotine.

5. Infidelity affords no light in darkness, no comfort in affliction, no hope in death. It leaves the widow in her weeds without one word of consolation, such as is offered by the promises of our holy religion; it deprives woman of her queenly dignity as the mother of a Christian home, and leaves man with no star in his sky and no hope in his heart, so that the past is a blank, the present is despair, and the future a rayless night.

6. Infidelity requires its votaries to believe that the best of the men that have lived was the worst, that the purest system is a lie, and that the grandest utterances are the offspring of the lowest imposture. According to infidelity Christianity, the light of the world, the hope of humanity, the friend of learning, the foster-mother of all benevolent institutions—such as asylums for the blind and deaf and dumb, and homes for the helpless widows and orphans—that this religion, which has done more than all else for the lessening of crime and sorrow, is itself a lie, its author an impostor, and its followers either hypocrites or idolaters. Surely such absurdity is too revolting to human reason and too much opposed to man's highest interests to be accepted either as reasonable or true. Professing to be rational, it is destitute of all show of reason, and is the mortal foe of its plainest teachings.

7. Infidelity demands that we should believe a lie to be better than the truth. It claims its system to be true and ours to be false, and hence the best system ever taught to man, ever embraced either by the immoral or the unfortunate, is itself the merest sham without the least glinting of truth. It teaches that Christianity is a lie, and we all know history teaches us, and observation and experience both attest it, that no system has ever done so much for our race as the religion of Jesus the Christ.

8. Infidelity requires of its votaries to believe that the loftiest of human characters was the vilest that ever lived. Can we believe an absurdity so repugnant to human reason, and so opposed to all that is taught in history or by our own observation? Can

any one not crazed by passion believe such an absurdity? Can any reasonable man believe that a base impostor was the best of men, that a lie is better than all truth, and that the only system which has elevated the race is the offspring of superstition, the child of passion or prejudice, and inculcating truth in both letter and spirit, is itself a base lie? Surely such a bed is too short, and such covering is too narrow. It is a system without one iota of truth, and can afford no satisfaction either here or in the great beyond.

Infidelity is a Sahara, without tree or shrub, without flower or fruit, with no singing bird or sparkling water, while Christianity is a beautiful garden, with sweetest flowers and most beautiful birds, and every thing to please the taste or to gratify the refined and pure. Infidelity is a pile of rubbish, affording no protection from the burning sun or the pelting rain; Christianity is a magnificent temple, with halls and corridors, with shining walls on a firm foundation, and with open doors inviting a weary world to shelter and protection, to find safety and repose. Infidelity is a miserable wreck, with no engine, no steam, no oars, no sails, no chart or compass, no rudder, no pilot, no captain, and no motive power save the power which carries it down, down to its native hell; Christianity is a beautiful ship, riding the waves like a beautiful sea-bird, and offering a safe voyage to the harbor of eternal rest.

Now let me appeal first to you that hear me, and then to all who may read this sermon. Come now, listen to reason, and bow to Him who rules the universe. Come to Jesus the Christ, and, acting in ac-

cordance with both reason and conscience, come and rest in Christ. In him is no fault. Here you can find all that can inspire hope and fill with peace and love. Reason calls you; truth invites; Jesus pleads. Come away from your narrow bed, your pile of rubbish, your barren Sahara, and enter the old ship of Zion, and come into this temple of the living God, and enjoy the sweet flowers and luscious fruits that grow in this garden of the living God. I come from a home made sad by death, and yet glowing with immortal hope, to offer you that which satisfies both reason and conscience, and fills with highest hopes and holiest joys. Come, I pray you, come. R.

IX.

THE SCARLET LINE.

“And she bound the scarlet line in the window.” (Josh. ii. 21.)

THERE is majesty in the movement of men when God is leading. Israel is ready to pass into Canaan. The rapid and restless Jordan is checked in its flow; its waters recede, and stand mute and motionless, waiting the passage of the hosts of God. Just beyond is Jericho, the Chicago of Canaan. Upon it they advance, not with bombs and batteries, but with the ark of God and the rams'-horn trumpets. Once a day, for six successive days, they compass the city, and on the seventh day they go round seven times. On the seventh round they blow the trumpets and shout, and the walls totter and tumble to the ground. But yonder remains one bit of the wall unshaken, and upon it a house, single and alone in the midst of the ruin, and from its window hangs a scarlet line. That is the home of Rahab. She has not perished. “By faith Rahab perished not with them that believed not.” That scarlet line is the expression of her faith and the emblem of her deliverance.

1. *Hers was a life-risk.* Marvelous rumors had reached Jericho concerning Israel: how the sea had separated before them, and how they had destroyed Kings Sihon and Og; and a great fear had fallen upon the men of Jericho. The gates were guarded, and strangers suspiciously observed. To conceal a

spy was death without mercy; but in the face of all, and with her life in her hands, Rahab hid the spies and helped them to escape. A mighty faith takes mighty risks. It takes the only son, and walks with steady step to the mount of sacrifice; it platts and plasters the bulrush basket, puts its babe within, and places it where the crocodiles crawl amid the river-flags, and rests composed as though each crocodile were an angel and each flag an armed sentinel for its defense. Faith walks in the places of peril, through dens of beasts, furnaces of fire, and amid death-valleys where shades and ghosts flit past; and yet it ever walks without alarm.

Here is a scene for the hand of a master: Rahab in conference with the spies. A star-light scene. They are upon the house-top and seated upon the flax, just a little above the city that is now nervous with excitement and forebodings. This heathen woman and these princes are in conference, and in the face of death she is negotiating for the lives of herself and family, and taking an oath at their hands that shall aid them and save her. Looking at this picture we may well say: "O woman, great is thy faith!" Faith made her name immortal; made her worthy to be the mother of Boaz, the mother-in-law of Ruth, and the maternal ancestor of the Son of Mary. And the faith that saves us is a faith that takes sublime risks—a faith that swears allegiance to God in the face of defeat, and in the midst of a God-hating generation; ready to hide the spies and help to bring humanity into captivity to him, though it cost criticism, ostracism, or even death; a faith that does not sleep, but is seen by the night-stars, Rahab-

like, upon the house-top, and in conference with God for the salvation of its loved ones.

While the world sleeps, morally, we must stand by the gospel windows with firm and fearless hand upon the scarlet lines, the saving influences whereby men escape from the captivity of sin. It was a noble deed to let Paul down in a basket over the Damascus wall—a noble deed—and noble words from this woman when she let down the spies and said: "Get you to the mountains." But nobler far is it to aid a soul to escape the precincts of sin, and bid it "escape" and "hide itself in the cleft of the Rock."

2. *A practical lesson.* Rahab was not looking for the spies, and yet she was ready for them when they came. Her industry and diligence made her ready. "Her flax was gathered, carried up, and laid in order on the house-top," just ready for a hiding-place for the spies when they came. And I dare say she knew just where to find that line when she needed it. It would have been an awkward affair had the flax been neglected and left in the field, and had she forgotten where she put the cord—nothing with which to conceal them, and nothing with which to let them down over the wall.

Yet this is the way with some good-meaning souls: always behind when an opportunity comes. They have neither flax nor cord when the spies come. An unexpected opportunity comes to do good, but the flax is in the field, and the scarlet line is out of place. They have been improvident, slothful, wasteful; and now, when God calls, they have nothing with which to respond. We waste enough in nonsense and "needless self-indulgence," if it were only saved and

laid by, to be ready for many a call of God. That is why God has mentioned Rahab's flax, and carefully told us that it was "carried up and laid in order." He would teach us to be ready—ready for God's call, though it come in the night-time and from a source we did not expect. Whatever we have of goods or money, have it in such shape that God can command its use at any time. It is a good thing to have the flax and the line in readiness.

3. *The style of the contract.* She did not attempt to dictate terms. If any one ever had opportunity to have a contract their own way, she had. Their lives were in her hands, and she was in fine position to dictate terms. She could have demanded as much of the gold and silver and spoils of the city, when it should be destroyed, as she wished; and had they hesitated, she could have brought them to speedy agreement by proposing to turn them over to the city authorities. Give some people the chance she had, and they will negotiate for enough to make their kin comfortable, and to control elections besides. But this woman makes but one demand: "That ye will save alive my father, my mother, my brethren, my sisters, and all that they have; and deliver our lives from death." True faith only asks its own; it seeks no commission off of its opportunities. It never buys a widow's house for less than its worth because she is forced to sell; it never takes a poor man's home at under-value because it has a mortgage which he cannot lift; it never takes the servant's labor at half its worth because he is forced to work at that price or starve.

Again. She did not ask to be removed. It was a fearful ordeal she was to meet: to see her city destroyed,

its walls demolished, and a wholesale butchery of its inhabitants; still she does not ask to be taken away from the dreadful scene. True faith does not ask to be taken away from the ills and evils common to life. It is willing to suffer and endure if it have the oath of God on which to stand. Rahab could witness all and endure all because of the oath that she and hers should be saved. How much we can endure when we feel God's promise beneath us! While we live in a land of uncertainties—the ground beneath and the sky above doomed to destruction—it is a royal thought that God's oath is beneath us. Rahab-like, faith does not ask to escape the sorrows and griefs of life, but only asks to feel its feet resting on the oath of God.

Her request. Life for herself and kindred. Had she asked only for herself, and been willing to see her kindred perish, her covenant would never have been recorded. Its selfishness would have sunk it into oblivion. But she demands her kin, *all her kin*. Faith cries for its kindred. It demands life for all, even the hopeless prodigal, and the faith that stipulates for less is weak and selfish. Have you stipulated for less? Have you closed the contract with God and left out a single one of your family? Then, which one? Is it a companion, parent, brother, child? Then hasten back to the house-top, reopen the conference, put that one into the contract, and open not the window, nor let the divine messenger go, until you get assurance that the last one shall live.

4. *She bound the line in the window.* Thus she placed the protecting ægis over herself and kindred.

This line was the sign and guarantee of her safety. Israel placed the blood over their doors and were safe, for God had said: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." And when this blood-colored line is seen streaming from her window, she and hers are safe. Both the blood and the line represent the blood of Christ: the one a protection to the Jew from the hand of the angel, the other the protection of a Gentile from the hands of warlike men. How beautifully is the saving power of the blood set forth! Whether a Jew in Egypt or a Gentile in Canaan, a Jew in Gentile lands or a Gentile on Jewish territory, all are safe under this blood.

The angel was duly instructed to trouble no house on whose door the blood was visible. Each soldier in Joshua's army had orders: "When you enter Jericho, in the heat and enthusiasm of conflict and triumph, protect the house that has a scarlet line hanging from its window." So the standing order has gone forth from the God of armies; and angels, men, and devils understand that "No harm is to come to the soul that is under protection of the blood. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever."

6. *The scene.* We look upon Jericho on that fatal day, and we shudder. The scene is awful, the work complete. The walls lie in ruins; every house sacked and its inmates slain; the frenzied screams of wives and mothers, the piteous cries of bleeding children, the groans of dying husbands and fathers, the heavy heavings of butchered beasts—all is over, and hushed and still in death. The city is pulseless: not a man, woman, child, nor so much as an ox, sheep, or ass

that lives. *What a scene!* But look! One lone house stands above the carnage, and rests on a remaining bit of the wall. What preserves it? There is no bulwark round about it, no armed men within it; only a defenseless woman and her helpless kindred occupy it. Why does that bit of wall stand as adamant beneath that house? Why are the inmates so serene and calm as they look out upon the surrounding ruin? What is their defense? A simple "scarlet line" that hangs idly from the window, and waves to and fro in the breeze. *That is God's power to save.*

7. *This earth is a Jericho.* And it is doomed. "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge it." His coming will be as the coming of Israel upon Jericho: "as a thief in the night." Have you "bound the line in the window?" Have you put yourself and family under protection of the blood? Have you settled it with God that you and yours are to be saved in the final destruction? Are you ready for the falling of the walls—ready for the crumbling of the earthly tabernacle and an introduction into the eternal world?

8. *The line she used was the line that saved.* The same line by which she saved the spies became the means of saving her and her family. She had doubtless platted and made that line just as we plat and make our own faith. And the faith which is to save us at last is not a special kind that has been laid by and kept on purpose to go to heaven upon, like a special suit for a special occasion; but it is the same old oft-tried, second-hand, well-worn faith that we have been working with all these years. The staff on which Jacob leaned when dying was not a new

and unused staff, cut and kept for that dying occasion, just as some queer people keep their coffins for years before they die; it was the same old staff that had propped him in his pilgrimage, and perhaps supported him when he limped over the brook with a disjointed thigh; that staff was his prop, living and dying.

The same faith which, like Rahab, has been willing to risk for others, and has kept the soul's windows continually open; the lines of holy influence reaching down to help others to escape from ruin—*this*, this is the faith that will support you in the last hour, when mortality's walls are falling; this is the faith that will keep you as serene in the final hour as she who looked from her window upon Jericho's ruin.

9. *The men she saved became her escort.* The two whom she had saved were sent in to bring her and her family out, and to escort them from the ruin, and to give her home and dwelling among their own people; and that because she had been faithful. The order was: "Bring out the woman, and all that she has, as ye sware unto her." And the all-conquering Christ, our own Joshua, will command those whom we have blessed to attend us in life's last hour. When this "earthly house is dissolving," and the time of dissolution is at hand, shall we not be met and welcomed by those whom we have loved and blessed in life? Is not this the last testimony of the holy and the good? Have they not told, in a thousand instances, of the presence of the departed with them when dying?

Then if we be now making up our escort from this world, let us have a large one. I am not careful for

a long train, a vast multitude, to follow my dust to the cemetery; but I should love to see a white-winged multitude ascending with my tired spirit to its final home and rest.

Dear fellow-spirit, candidate for immortality, see that "the line is bound in the window," "for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

M.

X.

A SERMONETTE FOR BOYS.

“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” (Jeremiah xiii. 23.)

THE text expresses in the strongest figurative language the inveteracy of habit. When man once becomes the slave of a bad habit its power over him is almost irresistible. It is about as easy for an Ethiopian to change his skin or a leopard his spots as for a human being to free himself from the controlling influence of a vicious habit. Let me here define habit. It is the ease acquired in the performance of an act by frequent repetition. This facility of performance is usually accompanied by an intense desire to repeat the act.

Let me illustrate: A boy indulges in an oath. He is almost frightened by his own voice. Intense shame follows the profane utterance. He repeats it. It is performed with more ease and with less hesitation, and with no trepidation. He again repeats it, and after a short time he can utter oath after oath without remorse or shame, and regardless of those who may be horrified by hearing them. It is soon a habit. He then swears without knowing it. He soon interlards his ordinary conversation with horrid oaths and imprecations. Ask him to give up a practice at once low, disgusting, and wicked, and he will answer: “I cannot. I do it without being conscious of it.”

It is his habit, and is almost as difficult to remove as black is from the skin of the Ethiopian or spots from the leopard.

Again, a youth is induced to take a social glass. He has no special fondness for the wine when it is ready. He has no disposition to rise up early and follow after strong drink; he could without self-denial refrain from it forever. He, however, is induced to repeat the drink. He acquires a taste for the horrid beverage and becomes a drunkard. The appetite enslaves him. He is no longer a free man. He is bound by fetters stronger than iron, and which he has no power to break. He is an infant in the hands of a giant, and that giant the worst of tyrants, and cruel as the grave. Can this Ethiopian change his skin? Alone he cannot.

A lady takes opium to ease pain. She despises the drug, but is induced to repeat the dose while suffering under a second and a third attack of severe pain. Soon the habit is formed. The once beautiful and true woman has become the slave of habit. She would sell her soul for the intoxicating drug. Once so pure, she would surrender purity itself to gratify the unholy appetite for a drug as poisonous to the mind and the passions as it is ruinous to the body. The habit becomes as permanent as is the quality of black to the skin of the Ethiopian or that of spots to the leopard.

A boy reads a dime novel. He is at first disgusted, and vows that he will never again pollute his taste by reading the vile stuff. In an evil moment he reads again, and soon he becomes a slave to the lowest thoughts and the most vicious passions, which are

the certain results of low and vicious literature, itself the offspring of the most salacious imagination.

So it is with cards and dice. At first the game has no special attractions, but by frequent repetition it becomes habitual. The gambler is a slave; and so terrible is his bondage that he would play at cards and fling his dice upon the casket that contained the body of his once loved and honored mother, who died of a broken heart. I have heard the poor slave to one of these habits declare that he was helpless in its grasp. Once a free man, now a slave! Such habits have robbed the bar of many of its brightest ornaments, have unfitted many a learned physician for his responsible duties, and, alas! alas! have reached up and dragged down some of the lights of the pulpit, and destroyed their power amid the terrible debauches of the low and vile. Let me then give some rules to govern those just entering upon the responsibilities of manhood.

1. Never commence a downward course. Never do a wrong or wicked thing. Never take the first glass or throw the first card. Guard against the first step, and you will never take the second—never form the habit.

2. Take warning by the fearful fate of others, and shun as you would the bite of the adder every influence that has a downward tendency.

3. Remember that all bad habits are sure to enslave. Good habits always leave you free, therefore never form any other. While free, stay free.

4. Shun all evil associates, and never read a bad book. They are sure to corrupt the morals, inflame the passions, and at last destroy both soul and body

in hell. Remember the fearful warning in the text: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?"

Lastly, while young and strong form good habits. Tell the truth; speak pure words; cultivate honesty; associate with the good; dare to be pious; honor your Creator; cling to Him who is the best guide of youth and the only stay of old age. Do this, and you will have no vicious habits to correct, and no vain regrets to harass you in old age or embitter your dying moments.

R.

XI.

AFTER BREAKFAST.

“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.” (John xxi. 15-19.)

CHRIST and his disciples are sitting together after the sea-side meal. He only can know the heart, and none can touch it so delicately as he. Oft, when we would deal gently, we strike the wrong cord. We give pain where we would soothe; and especially is this the case when our own hearts are out of tune.

The wayward boy returns at the late night-hour, to receive stern rebuke from the angry parent, and is sent to his room under sentence of correction on the morrow. That boy sleeps, if sleep he can, as the convict in his cell. The wretchedness and unrest

produce desperation, and so wilt the sensibilities that the morrow's correction is without effect.

Peter had been wayward; he expected rebuke. Once or twice he had seen the Master since his bad conduct, and nothing had been said. But, like the naughty child, he is on the look-out—does not feel easy. But the Master is never harsh or untimely, even in rebuke. He says nothing to him before the meal, while he is tired and wet and hungry, and mortified by a fruitless night's toil. How delicate that wisdom that knows when to say nothing! Jesus first fills Peter's net; flushes him with the enthusiasm of success; then, with the warm meal ready, he calls them to "come and dine." And perhaps the talk while dining was of the cheery sort, in reference to their wonderful success after a night of failure. Then after they have dined, and sitting in that social rest and peculiar comfort which follow a pleasant meal, he deftly touches the matter on which Peter had felt such dread. He opens the interview on the tender side of Peter's nature: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

1. *This talk takes the whole life-range.* The bitter past was vividly though tenderly brought before Peter's mind. Christ had called him "Cephas," a rock—the solid, the reliable one. But now he calls him "Simon, son of Jonas"—son of human weakness. Peter had avowed a love above all the others: "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I forsake thee." And now, after his shameful fall, Jesus asks him, "Simon, lovest thou me more than these?" This was a love-stroke that well-nigh crushed him. It was the love-light falling back over his conduct,

and revealing its darkness. He saw the whole scene again—the mob, the traitor, the captive, the court, the servants round the fire, and his own valiant self squatted in the midst. He heard again the palpitations of his own cowardly heart, and the ominous crowing of that old Roman cock. Yes! That is the man who was going with him “to prison or to death.” There was never a moment of such humiliation with him. If Peter ever seemed small in his own eyes, it was that morning, as he sat in the sand at the feet of his Master, and looked back at his own picture in the past.

How the words of Christ sometimes bring the past in review before us! A word, a sentence re-arrays the by-gone experience before us. He would have us mindful of the past. No part of our experience is to run to waste. He makes our falls and failures as medicines for our weaknesses. Bitter medicine it may be, but healing to the soul. The “pains of hell,” with the Psalmist, were a prophylactic against pain that is endless. That sea-side retrospect did more to humble the son of Jonas and fortify him for the future than did his heroism when he would cleave the head of the high-priest’s servant. These reviews of life increase our humility; and we must get near to Christ to see the past clearly. The cloud in the west shows darkest as the sunrise glory falls upon it. Our failures show up in their true colors when we stand in the light of his presence and look back upon them. It is then we would kneel in the dust. How many denials; how oft have we gone over to the enemy; how frequently sat down with the servants of sin, and warmed ourselves at the world’s fires; how

often startled by the cock-crowing of conscience—that interior monitor, whose alarms come to us at all watches of the night!

He asked to know but one thing. He put the question three times, but the same question each time—“Lovest thou me?” He did not ask Peter how much he had cried, groaned, or suffered; how deep his shame, or how pungent his penitence; he simply asked about *his love*. It is not revenue or sacrifice, but the demand is *love*. Nothing but love will satisfy the human or divine. Childhood laughs when it is loved. Manhood and womanhood are brave in the life-battle when sustained by love. Misfortune is cheerful and poverty sings when they are beloved. And love is the staff on which old age leans to worship, even when dying. This is heaven’s draught. There is that in God’s nature that demands love, as though it were needful to him. His only levy upon humanity is a levy of love. “Thou shalt love with all the heart, mind, and strength.” Humanity, like the woman of Canaan, cries up to God, “Lord, help me!” God looks down to answer the cry with the question, “Lovest thou me?” Man crying for help; God calling for love. This is the question pressed upon us every day. He asked it of Peter three times; he asks it of us continually. By the light of each rising day; by the bounty of your burdened board; by the music of your own child’s laugh; through a thousand avenues of joy, like telephone connections with the soul, comes this divine whisper, “*Lovest thou me?*” Therefore, since life is a continuous tax upon God—upon his earth, upon his air, his patience, and his love—can it be less than mean, ungrateful, and

ignoble to refuse him the one and only demand—*our love?*

2. *The one qualification.* Jesus is now going to change the old fisherman into a “fisher of men.” He will now put a net in his hand that will never need mending. So he is now probing to see if he can find the one essential element. He doesn’t ask him if he is a Calvinist or Arminian; whether he believes every thing that every other orthodox Galilean believes; whether converted instantaneously or gradually; whether he believes in the “second blessing;” but he goes deeper than the creeds and the “doxies,” and inquires for the basis of his Christian character, “Lovest thou me?” Here is the qualification for “catching men.” The preacher without an all-absorbing love for Christ will fail. However gifted, however brilliant in thought or wonderful in utterance, he will never overcome opposing forces and do the work of a minister unless he have an ever-burning love for Christ. As a Church-member, you will work for Christ and succeed in your work in proportion to your love for him. It is a joy to labor for those whom we love. How sweet the service when the impulse is love! How grand the march when the soul can say:

’Tis love that drives my chariot wheels,
And death must yield to love!

Jesus puts all into one sentence—how much we will labor, sacrifice, and suffer—when he asks, “Lovest thou me?”

He trusted Peter again. Christ’s forgiveness always includes *reinstatement*. He didn’t tell Peter that he forgave him, but couldn’t trust him any more. But

for each avowal of love he gave him a commission of trust.

Our forgivenesses too often lack this element of trust. We forgive the man who has betrayed us, but we keep an eye on him. We give him no chance to deceive us again. Like the breachy brute which has broken into the field, we turn him out and forgive the trespass, but put a yoke on him so he will not trespass the second time. The man who has deceived us generally wears the yoke of our distrust; and it is many a day before we remove the yoke and trust him as before. But Christ puts no yoke upon his penitent disciple. When he re-avows his love, Christ re-affirms his commission; lifts him to the pastorship and care of his people—"Feed my sheep." How full and complete his pardon! We feel that he loves and trusts us as sincerely as though we had never sinned.

3. *His future opened to his view.* "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." Here is Christian heroism in its active and passive forms—in the impetuosity of youth, and the patience of age. Peter had known nothing but his own will and way, and even when with the Master it was hard for him to keep his sword in its scabbard. But when he was old he learned to suffer and submit; to be girded by another and led uncomplainingly to crucifixion. Hence he "glorified God" in his death, showing forth a moral grandeur beyond all his active life. Here is life in its fore and afternoon. Youth—life's spring-

time—how positive, how self-asserting! How positive is the natural spring-time—activity, self-assertion, movement everywhere! Dame nature and all her children awake and stirring; grass, flowers, brooks, birds, breezes—every thing in motion. So with youth. The whole being is full of stirring forces—fancies, ambitions, aspirations, expectations, the entire being asserting itself and making itself heard and known. The youthful spirit, like the herd upon its native plain, spurns the lasso. Misfortune, adversity, and disaster may seek to curb it, but it tosses them aside, as Samson breaking and shaking the withes from his hands.

“But when thou shalt be old.” Age is life’s autumn-time—the time of relaxing forces. The elements grow quiet, fruits ripen, leaves wither, flowers fade: Nature ceases her self-assertion, and, becoming passive, yields to the cold hand that girds her with an icy girdle and leads her to a wintery tomb. There is a grandeur in the autumn not seen in the other seasons—the grandeur of submission that teaches how to yield, how to suffer, and how to die. “Signifying the manner of death by which he should glorify God.” There are elements waiting to gird us when we have gone further on life’s way. When the sight is dim and the steps are short, we will meet those things in the twilight—consumption, paralysis, blindness, old age, and infirmity in a thousand forms; all these, with girdles ready, are awaiting us. We shall stretch forth our hands in helplessness, and these shall gird and lead us to the confinement of the sick-room, to unrest, dissolution, and the grave. But this will be the special time in which to “glorify God.”

This is the time mentioned by the Master. There was a captive's girdle, a prison, and a cross before Peter, but with it all his chief chance to honor God. Disease, helplessness, suffering, and even death are before us, but in these are our royal opportunities to glorify God. If God is seen in the quiet dignity of the dying autumn, how much more in the peaceful patience and holy tranquillity which mark the decline and close of a holy life?

4. *The command.* "When he had thus spoken he said, Follow me." Having retrospected the past and prospected the future, he now receives instruction for the present—"Follow me." We gain nothing by lingering in lamentations over past failures—going back to mourn at those places where we sat with the servants of sin, warmed at the world's fires, and avowed that we did not know Christ. Regrets can never remedy the by-gone. Equally weak and useless is it to be looking tremblingly forward to those things which wait by the wayside to gird and lead us to suffering and death. They are ambushed in the darkness of the future. It is good for us that they are not visible. We are not to live amid regrets of the past or fears of the future, but in consecrated use of the present, and that in the Master's immediate company. "Follow me." This is God's command to us personally to-day. Doom and destiny hang neither on the past nor future, but on the present. *To-day!*—more momentous than the dying day. We can breathe only for the present, and so can serve God only in the present. The order is imperative, and with divine emphasis—"Follow me." It has no past or future tense. This is the panacea for a wasted

past; the remedy for a hopeless future—follow Christ. Begin his service to-day—regrets will be forgotten, fears will all die, while the soul will ascend to that experience wherein it can “rejoice evermore.”

Then stay the present instant—
Imprint the marks of wisdom on its wings,
'Tis of more worth than kingdoms!
Far more precious than all the
Crimson treasures of life's fountain.
O let it not elude thy grasp! but, like
The good old patriarch upon record,
Hold the fleet angel until he bless thee.

XII.

THE RENT VEIL.

“The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” (Matt. xxvii. 51).

THE greatest tragedy ever witnessed on earth was fast closing amid scenes of terrible import. Jesus the Christ had just yielded up the ghost. The earth did quake, and the rocks were rent, the graves were opened, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Now let us, like Moses when the bush burned with fire and was not consumed, turn aside and see this great sight. Let us in the fear of God try to find out the meaning of this supernatural work.

The veil of the temple separated the holy place from the most holy—the Holy of Holies. Into this most holy no living being was allowed to enter save the high-priest, and he only once a year, on the day of atonement. Jesus was crucified on the day of atonement, and at the solemn moment of his death the high-priest was alone in the Holy of Holies.

The veil, consequently, may represent ignorance; for ignorance shuts out the light of God from the mind. Ignorance, instead of being the mother of devotion, hides from the poor, darkened mind the very evidence of God’s existence, and prevents it from grasping the idea of the eternal and omnipotent God. It so darkens the mind as that it makes gods of its

own; it bows down to the lower animals; it worships the crocodile; it reveres the ox; it offers prayers to a snake; it adores the sun; builds temples to idols; it offers sacrifices to imaginary deities; it forms images, and worships them; it revels amid scenes of cruelty; and with garments dabbled in human gore, with pallid lips and frightened look and tearful eyes, and often with terrible self-inflictions, it worships objects often unworthy of respect. Ignorance created Jupiter and Saturn, Venus and Juno; ignorance fashioned a deity for every hill-top, and placed one on the crest of every wave. It filled groves and forests, gardens and fields, lakes and rivers, oceans and seas, with imaginary deities, until they were counted by the thousands. It covered the eye of reason and conscience as with a thick veil, and God—the true God—was entirely shut out. Imaginary deities were multiplied, but God was ignored. The unknown God was ignorantly worshiped until Paul, on Mars' Hill, proclaimed the only true God and eternal life. To know God the clouds of ignorance are to be dispersed, and the light of knowledge and the effulgence of divine truth must be poured upon the soul.

Again, the veil may represent sin as shutting out the knowledge of God. But for sin the knowledge of God had never been lost. It beclouds reason, weakens the judgment, and unfits the soul for all higher knowledge; it is the bane of intellect; it darkens all its forces; it is opposed to all development; it corrupts all that is pure, and dwarfs its growth; it is impenetrable by light, and impervious to every ray of sunshine. The footsteps of the Creator can neither be heard nor seen by one resting beneath the impene-

trable folds of this veil of sin. It is all dark and as separating from God as it is dark and foul, sad and dreary. An Egyptian night is light beside the darkness in which this terrible monster, sin, enfolds its victims. It drove man from God; it shut him out of Eden; it closed the doors of paradise; it said, Let there be darkness, and the blackness of darkness fell upon man and all his posterity.

Then it is possible that the veil may have had special reference to the flesh of Christ. That flesh shrouded the Deity. It was a veil behind which the eternal Divinity was hidden. So Paul: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." As the veil of the temple inclosed the grandest representations of Deity, so did his flesh inclose the eternal God. In the body of Christ God was incarnate. That sad countenance, that emaciated body, worn with fasting and with toil, that consecrated form was the hiding of the Godhead, was the dwelling-place of the Holy One who inhabiteth eternity.

We now call attention to the typical character of the rending of the veil.

1. It typifies the rending of Christ's flesh in the great work of human redemption. Without the shedding of blood there could be no redemption. In the death of Christ God is revealed as nowhere else. He is seen in all the acts of creation and in all the workings of providence. He moves the mysterious wheels. He raiseth up one and putteth down another. His is the great invisible hand that determines the destinies of empires. His fearful presence was manifest

in the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. When the mountain quaked and smoked, amid thunder and lightning and the most fearful displays of material grandeur, he was there. In all the miracles before Egypt's proud and defiant king, in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, in the wonder-working rod of Moses, in the path through the sea, and in the overflowing waves beneath which the Egyptians were overwhelmed; in the falling manna and in the water gurgling from the smitten rock; in all the magnificent prophecies which pointed to the the great coming One; and then in Bethlehem's stable, and all along the simple yet wonderful life, to the Son of God—the great Eternal One is to be seen. But above and beyond all other manifestations of the Divine Being was this one upon the cross. Here the whole Deity is known. Power and love, wisdom and grace, justice and mercy, all shine in the atonement, as they do in no other part of the history of God's dealings with man. Gentleness and wrath are forever harmonized by the rending of Christ's flesh. Justice shakes hands with mercy, and they are forever united as they speak in one harmonious tongue to angels and to men. God is seen as the great King and the loving Father, as inflexible as truth and tender as love, as requiring law to be fulfilled and yet offering pardon to the guilty. Sinai responds to Calvary, and Moses and Elias gather at the cross to witness the grandest display of the Godhead. All the prophets are there, and join in one harmonious strain to celebrate law fulfilled, God honored, and man redeemed. His flesh is torn, and as his blood pours out for the saving of the world the love of God

is expressed as never before. Sisters, brethren, you can hear Moses say, This is He that was to be lifted up for the healing of the nations. Jeremiah, smiling through his tears, cries out: This is the Branch; come, behold, all ye that pass by. David is there, and cries aloud: The dogs have compassed him; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed him; so they have pierced his hands and his feet. Isaiah answers: He is wounded for our transgressions, he is bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. He has trodden the wine-press alone. Daniel stands in his lot, and harmonizing with all these voices, repeats what had been uttered hundreds of years before: Messiah is cut off, but not for himself. Then in one loud acclaim all join and shout: This is he that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, and hath trodden the wine-press alone. Then the All-father exclaims from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. I have given him because of my love for a lost world, that whosoever believeth in him might be saved.

Hallelujah, God reigns! Let us, beloved brethren, join in the chorus and shout aloud, Jesus lives. Justice is enthroned with mercy at his side, holding out a helping hand. Power reaches down to save. Goodness and truth blend in the richest offer of eternal life to a fallen world.

2. The rending of the veil is typical of the tearing away of the cloud of ignorance which has so long shut out the light of God from our fallen race. When the veil was rent the high-priest was alone in

the Holy of Holies. There was the divine Shekinah, and there the Urim and Thummim. Suddenly the rent was made. Light shone upon those wonderful representations of Deity. The Mercy-seat was resplendent; it sparkled with praise. The people look through the rent veil, and see such manifestations of Deity as they never saw before. So we shall know more of God; we do now know more of him. He is better understood now than ever before; he is more generally known than in all the past. Through this rent veil a sunburst of resplendent light has fallen upon the world. Four hundred millions of people are almost dazed by this supernatural light. It shines; it encircles the Divine throne with rainbow splendors; it is fast girdling the globe. Efforts are being concentrated as never before. Women and children are gladly helping in this glorious work.

From north to south the princes meet
To pay their homage at his feet;
While western empires own their Lord,
And savage tribes attend his word.

Brethren, the nations are falling into ranks. Truth is immortal; truth is powerful. Love is omnipotent. The gospel is aggressive. The angel is flying through the heavens. Light is streaming; the Sun of righteousness is shining in his strength, and in full-orbed splendor, his round of rays complete, and with no dimming veil to prevent the shedding of a radiance which has no cloud, and which must dispel all the clouds and mists of earth. Hail, holy Light! Receive this day the greeting of this Western World, of this Christian assembly, and fly with more than electric speed to illuminate the world.

Again, the rent veil typifies the removal of sin which has so long like a dark night enveloped the world in its murky folds. Christ died for sin. He died to remove its curse. His flesh was torn and His blood was shed that the blighting curse of sin might be forever banished from the world. To take away sin darker than night and drearier than the grave Jesus Christ the Son of God was crucified. Sin has hung over the world and over all hearts, like an impenetrable veil, for thousands of years. It is to be finally destroyed; its life is the violation of God's law and the disgrace of humanity; it must be destroyed, and it will be. The heavens shall shine, songs of victory shall be heard, the year of jubilee shall come, when the monster sin shall be tied hand and foot and cast into outer darkness. Earth shall be regenerated; humanity shall be renewed; right shall conquer; peace shall pour its blessings upon a world disenthralled; the reproach of a race shall be forever washed away in the blood of the Lamb.

Then as the rending of the veil was complete from top to bottom, so that which it typified is complete. Redemption is achieved in all its richness and fullness. It is finished; Jesus uttered it, and bowed his head and died. O grand accomplishment! O wondrous love! O divine and majestic work! Love is satisfied, justice is satisfied; God, in all the perfection of his Divine nature, is satisfied. It is finished; a volume in a sentence; an ocean in a drop; eternity concentrated in one sublime moment. All the hours of time meet around the cross. It is finished. Let the words go echoing all along the centuries and

around the world; let angels and men proclaim the work done—man saved, God reconciled, heaven opened. Redemption is to be the one grand refrain of heaven and earth, the one sublime acclaim of angels and of men. Let us, my brethren, this day join with this uncounted multitude in the sweetest song of earth or sky: Jesus died for all; the work is full complete, finished.

The rending was supernatural, and so is redemption supernatural. Let us bow to the supernatural; let us look through the rent veil to the mercy-seat; let us cry out:

Nay, but I yield, I yield!

I can hold out no more:

I sink, by dying love compelled,

And own thee Conqueror!

I beseech you turn not away from this grand sight. The scene is sublime beyond description. God incarnate is the great center and the infinite circumference. God is all in all—God incarnate, God redeeming, God saving. O dear friends, come with me and stand near the cross; see the rending veil, the torn flesh; build upon Him, the living and dying Christ. In the name of all that is beautiful and true, in the name of all that is sublime in the character of Christ and his holy religion, say now with me:

In my hand no price I bring;

Simply to thy cross I cling.

XIII.

ESHCOL GRAPES.

"And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff." (Num. xiii. 23.)

HERE we have test and testimony concerning God's word. He had promised militant Israel a land "flowing with milk and honey." They have come into the vicinity of that land. A detail of proper men is sent to spy out the land, and see if it meets the divine promise. God will not march them over and into that land as so many sheep or cattle. He will not drive them in, but will grant them the privilege of going in of their own volition. They are to have the privilege of testing the land—know its excellences and obstacles—and then, standing on his promise, decide for themselves whether they will go over and possess it.

This is divine dealing. God leaves every grand issue with us. We decide every land we will conquer. Every Canaan has attractions and obstacles—tempting clusters and dreadful giants. There are rich fruits in the realms of science—wealth and culture—but there are giants to overcome before we reach them, and it is left for us to decide whether we will go up and possess these lands. Likewise God does not drive men into his kingdom, as Jacob's flocks over the brook, but it is left for every man to

say for himself whether he will serve God. Every man carries with him the royal right of choice. Heaven will be more a heaven by the thought that *I chose it*, and hell a fourfold hell by the remembrance that it is my own choice. My doom is of God's sealing, but my choosing. I decide it; God sanctions my decision. I am my own judge, while God only puts his seal to my verdict.

I. *These were select men.* It was an enterprise involving great issues—their own interests and also those of their people. They were to spy and report, and that report should govern the action of the people. Hence the best men are selected: a ruler from each tribe—men who had been tested and found worthy of rulership. These men go under divine direction, proceed with prudence and caution, and separate into smaller companies lest they attract notice and arouse suspicion. They travel as wayfarers; go to mountain summits, from whence the views are perfect; note the face of the land, its people, products, prospects, and all concerning it. They take ample time, though in great danger, to do their work well. They spend forty days reconnoitering, and leave not the land until they know what it is and what it contains. When they recross and return to camp, they are prepared to report in full—all sides, phases, and features have been seen.

1. *These are representative men.* God still selects the grandest characters to test and testify to the truth of his word. The men who have stood for God in all ages have been rulers of the tribes. Rulers in the higher sense—moral rulers. Infidelity may laugh at Christianity as a superstition, but can't laugh at the

mighty men who bow at her shrine. Before these men infidelity stands with silent lips and uncovered head. Since the wise men kneeled at the feet of its infant Founder science and learning have ever delighted to pour their "gold, frankincense, and myrrh" at the feet of Christianity. And as Israel's action was determined by the report of the spies, so the world is influenced by the report of those who have made test of the divine promise. These people had seen God's power in marvelous forms. They had passed the plagues, followed that which was "cloud by day and fire by night," walked dry-shod through the open sea, and danced and sung as their enemies perished in the deep. But after all, they now act upon the testimony of these spies as if God had never spoken. Ah! the world waits for our report. After all God has done and said, after the mighty writing here recorded, after the marvelous history of his hand with men and nations, the world is influenced by our report at last. Men forget what God has done, but they don't forget the testimony of our lives. Is not this what Christ meant when he said, "Greater works than these shall ye do?" Did he not mean that we shall influence men by our life and example more than they are influenced by his word and his power?

2. *We have seen all phases of experience.* The returning spies could make full report. We who have been testing the promises by years of experience, have seen all shades of service. We have been "up by the South" where the breath was like balm, and the flowers like Eden for beauty. We have crossed the valleys and sterile lands, and have been to the

mounts of vision. We have noted the products, and seen the Anakim and the walled cities. We have been in the beatitudes and in the straits and distresses of Israelitish life. There was not a feature of the land the spies did not see. What one did not see, another did. There is not a phase of experience that is not known to some one of us to-day. Not a flower with fragrance untried, nor fruit with flavor unknown. Not a danger with horror unfelt, nor a weeping place whose precincts are not familiar; neither a mount of vision with summit unscaled. The spies were forty days, while we have been forty years testing the promises. And here we are now—the spies of God reporting to the world. What of our report? Are the promises true? Do we show ourselves satisfied with the test? Do we say, with Caleb, “It is enough, we are able to go up and possess the land?” or are we, like the ten, so living as to discourage men in God’s service?

II. *They were confirmed by the test.*

They had faith in the promise when they entered the land, and each day served to increase that faith; and after forty days they came out confirmed in the belief of what God had said, though ten of the number were discouraged because of the “giants and walled cities.” Caleb may have penetrated and explored the new land to a point not reached by the others. He was the Livingstone of the exploration. And with deeper insight and experience, he returned with mightier faith. *This is Christian experience.* The deeper the test, the stronger the faith. The mightiest cedar on Mount Lebanon is the one that has bent under most storms and sent its roots deep-

est into the fissures of the rocks. The mightiest faith is that which has heard oftenest the thunders of peril, and bent most frequently under adversity's beetling hail. Tell me how far you have been from land, and I will tell your fear of the ocean. The man who has never before seen the briny blue will reel at the first lurch of the vessel, and stagger, sickened, into his berth. The sea-tanned tar, who has lived on the billows, is at home in the tempest, and sings amid the rigging as a bird upon its wind-swayed bough. Tell me how often and how far out you have been alone with God—how often out of sight of land; out where no human hand could rescue, nor human sympathy come; out where you could do nothing but sink down and rest in God's hand and wait his deliverance—tell me this, and I will tell you how strong is your faith in God. Every ordeal in life, where the earth-lights were blown out and you left alone with God, was an Ebenezer from whence you have walked in a mightier faith.

III. *They brought fruits in proof.*

This cluster proved the richness of the land. It was the luscious, crimson evidence that it was superior to all other lands. The wine in that cluster stimulated the two millions. They had heard and hoped and thought and dreamed of the new land; but this bunch of grapes did more to confirm their faith than all they had thought or dreamed.

The world waits for the Eshcol clusters. After all our writing, preaching, and expatiating on the beauties of Christianity, the world asks for proofs in the form of fruits—fruit unlike that which it produces. "Show us some clusters such as the world can't grow

—clusters full of the wines of love, joy, peace, self-sacrifice, holy heroism. We may laud our Christianity, and tell of its glories and its ecstasies; but the world is looking to see the cluster on the staff—to see what we bring out of the Beulah Land, how rich the fruits, what manner of cluster on the staff between us, and how we carry together as the reporting spies of God.

1. *There was a scene when they returned.* Those two noble men bearing that mammoth cluster. Tired, dusty, foot-sore, but stepping steadily and together, lest the grapes be shaken loose and the cluster damaged. Here they come into camp with such a trophy as Israel had never seen! Here is the excitement common when expectant thousands await the news. Men, women, children—all excited. There are *ten* to tell the news, and *two* to bear the grapes; but the two have more auditors than the ten. They turn from the story to the fruit, as children with the new book turn first to see its pictures.

Those are grand lives who are banded together to bear the Canaan fruits to perishing humanity. Living, laboring, and suffering together to confirm men in the faith of the gospel, how essential that they step together. A single misstep, and the Eshcol cluster had been ruined. Have you a single line of influence? Have you cut down a single branch and brought as much as one cluster? Then bear it with care. "See that ye walk circumspectly." A single false step may loose and destroy your power with men.

2. *It was a work for others.* They had no self in the matter. The pains and care of carrying this burden

all that journey were that the people might see and taste and know that God was true and Canaan real.

The world is not interested in what we have seen and enjoyed. It is poor comfort to a hungry man to tell him you are just from a feast. Humanity, in its hunger, wants to know what we have for *it*. It asks: "Have you brought any thing out of your years of experience that will help me? Any thing to feed and stimulate me? Have you a cluster that will give me new hope and a new hold on God?"

IV. *It was a small trophy.*

They had feasted and rested amid the rich grape forests, which were then in their autumnal glory. But they cannot carry this glory of nature back with them. They can only do as we—bring away a vial of Jordan water, a shell from the Mediterranean, an olive-leaf from the Mount of Ascension. "They cut down one branch with one cluster" out of the vast green and purple that clothed the valleys and fringed the hills. Think of it! "One branch with one cluster" out of all that wide and wasting wealth. That was all they could carry back; and it required two men and a long, weary journey to do that.

How little of the real wealth of the atonement do we bring into view and live out before men! Canaan, in all its matchless purple and crimson, was but a perishing picture of that gospel highland where the fruits of the Spirit grow to perfection, where the air is redolent with celestial odors, and the communion with God is perfect—that life which is ours when, like the spies, we get over and up amid the grape-bowers and autumn sun of Canaan's hills.

1. *This one cluster showed what was there.* Though

they could not bring the fruit-wealth of Canaan over into the wilderness, yet they brought enough to show what was there. One bunch was ample for this. It showed the quality, and they must go over themselves to see and know the quantity. Here were grapes such as Egypt's Goshen could never produce. Though twelve picked and prominent men had been gone forty days and brought back this single cluster, yet there was a power in it that will never die, a flavor known to the Church to this day. To the men of the world the Church seems to be a long while doing little. But ever and anon we see a life in the Church such as the world can't produce—a life, like the Eshcol cluster, that is undying. Every age, condition, and community has a production known only to Christianity. There are lives in your memory, and in your midst, that will never die. Like the Eshcol grapes, they will live and ever be rich and sweet and beautiful.

2. *The proof was positive.* They saw and tasted the fruits before crossing over. No hearsay foundation for their faith. They had threefold testimony: God's word, the statement of the noblest men in their ranks, and the sight and taste of the Canaan fruit.

Ours is not a religion founded upon tradition or legend; but it rests upon God's word, the testimony of the noblest men of history, and our own experiences. While resting on his word, firmer than Gibraltar, our faith brings to us an occasional cluster that flavors of immortality. We have elevated hours wherein we partake of fruits grown in latitudes far above this dull earth; hours when we partake of joys known only to the supernatural.

An Eastern conqueror, marching to take possession

of a certain country, contrived to have his soldiers taste the wine of that land; and such was its excellence that so soon as they had tasted it they vowed the conquest of that land. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." As soldiers of Christ we are marching to the conquest of the heavenly highlands, and God allows us to taste its wines, to know its joys, that we may be filled with holy heroism to conquer and possess it. Have you foretasted the joys of the redeemed? Have you tasted the grapes that grow hard by the Eshcol brooks in glory? Have you had hours when you were above the world and its care and sorrow—lifted up until "whether in the body or out of it you could not tell?" Hours when you breathed the fragrance and beheld the fruits which perfume and hue and color the hills of God? Is this joy worth life's battle? Is it worth what it costs in the marchings weary and fightings sore? *My brethren*, taste this fruit, and know that life is worth living. God refresh you with occasional Eshcol clusters until the campaign shall end amid the celestial bowers!

M.

XIV.

THE RACE TO DEATH.

“If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?” (Jer. xii. 5.)

HUMAN life is a struggle, it is a race; a battle. If a person desires to be good, he has to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil. If he is determined to be wicked, he must fight against reason, conscience, and all the moral influences which are designed to make him better. In the text this conflict is compared to a race. By footmen are meant our equals, and by horses are meant our superiors. The way of the transgressor is hard. God has obstructed the path to ruin. The stubborn, unyielding sinner is opposed at every step by Him who seeks man's best interests both for this life and the eternal life in the great beyond. God first sends his footmen, and if they weary him but do not overcome him, then he will send his horses, to which he will be forced to yield. The text is highly figurative, and in discussing it we beg to call your attention first to the footmen.

These are the ordinary means employed to turn men from sin, all of which are designed to weary the sinner in treading a pathway so opposed both to interest and to duty. Thus every irreligious man has to contend against the dictates of enlightened reason in pursuing his way to ruin. Reason teaches the ex-

istence of God; his glory shines in every star; the firmament showeth his handiwork; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge, and in the ear of reason each loudly declares the existence of God. Yet the atheist closes his ears to every voice of nature that declares the existence of God. His own complex frame, with every bone and muscle and vein and sinew, exhibits design, and design cannot exist without a designer. The hand, which distinguishes man from all the lower animals, in the wisdom of its plan and the perfectness of its adaptation to all the different tasks assigned it, silently attests, in every movement, the existence of a great intelligent First Cause. So every thing above, beneath, around—from the grain of sand to worlds of inconceivable magnitude—teaches the same great truth: that there is a God. Surely it must weary any rational man to shut out all these evidences and declare that there is no God. Reason has to be out-run by this accountable being as he refuses to listen to the declaration: There is a God.

Then conscience impels to virtue and restrains from vice, and imperfect harmony with reason opposes every form of infidelity. It is another one of the footmen against which all that are running the race to death are compelled to contend. Then we have, all over this country of ours, stated preaching on the Sabbath-day, and often a social meeting for song and prayer some night during the week. These are the ordinary means of grace designed to effect the salvation of men. The preaching of the gospel, the voice of sacred song, the utterance of humble, earnest prayer, the testimony of loving, faithful Christians,

are all designed to turn the sinner from his sins and to cause him to determine to change his course and make a start for heaven. Here, too, in these Sabbath and week-day gatherings, invitations, tender, frequent, earnest, and loving, are often given to every prodigal to come back to his Father's house; to every unconverted man to turn from the way of the transgressor and enter the path of the just which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

Then in all the ordinary dispensations of divine providence there are calls to virtue; calls from sin to holiness; from darkness to light, and from Satan to God. In the succession of day and night, of summer and winter, of spring and autumn; in the shining dew-drop and in the fruitful shower; in life and death; in health and sickness; in the joys of home and the events of domestic life; in all the ordinary changes of the rolling year, he utters forth a glorious voice, tender as a mother's as it softly falls from maternal lips upon the ears of childhood, inviting from wrong, deceit, and all forms of sin, and calling to all that is true and beautiful and good.

Then we have all the ordinary calls of the holy, to which the determined sinner must turn a deaf ear, as they enlighten, correct, reprove, and warn all to heed their different voices, and cease to follow a road which as certainly leads to eternal woe as God is true and man is responsible.

All these instrumentalities are regarded in the text as footmen, to contend with whom is the work of all unconverted and determined sinners. It is certain, however, that these influences necessarily harass and weary the men and women possessed of ordinary

common sense who are continuing their downward course. The regular ministry of a faithful pastor, as he preaches Christ and him crucified, must touch the conscience, alarm the fears, and, to some extent at least, arouse the guilty to a sense of duty and of danger. A spell of sickness or a death in the family often comes as a warning to prepare to die. Still one's eyes may be closed and ears shut to all these influences so sacred and so pure. The heart may be kept impervious to all these sacred influences, and though wearied the stubborn soul may resist and reject.

The prophet desires to teach us, in the second place, that God often employs extraordinary means to save the lost. These are called in the text horses. The argument is, if the ordinary means bring weariness to the sinner, the extraordinary must almost necessarily break down the sinner and cause him to yield to the superior force. If footmen weary, horses must overcome; if equals cause unrest, what will be the result of a struggle against the heaviest odds?

The means used on revival occasions, the extraordinary testimonies of God's saints, the fervent prayers of pious men and women, the shouts of happy Christians, the speaking countenances and flowing tears of young converts, together with extraordinary and most powerful appeals from the pulpit cannot fail to move the heart, arouse the conscience and stir the soul to its depths.

For the further elucidation of this wonderful passage of holy writ allow us to refer you to the sixth chapter of Revelation. Here John has a vision of horses sent forth in God's providence to turn the

sinner from sin to holiness, from error to truth, from Satan to God, and from hell to heaven. First, we have the white horse, and He that sat on him has a crown upon his head and a bow and arrow in his hand, and He goeth forth conquering and to conquer. This is a glorious vision of the risen Christ going forth to the conquest of the world; it is Jesus of Nazareth, preached by all the evangelists from the resurrection until now. On the third morning after the fearful wrestle with death He proclaims Himself the resurrection and the life. The grave is dismantled and death is conquered. He then mounts his snow-white conquering charger, and soon the arrows fly and thousands are brought home to the Saviour. He traverses Palestine; he moves like a warrior, with his sword upon his thigh, along the Mediterranean; he throws his arrows along the isles and over the continents; after awhile he stands upon the shores of the Atlantic and prepares to make a mighty leap across a storm-swept ocean. As he makes that leap—the greatest ever made—he turns his bow and arrows upon the isles of the sea, and they receive his law, just as the great prophet Isaiah had foretold. Then all along the Atlantic coast, and across the mountains and over the Father of Waters, and beyond the Rockies, the white horse and his rider are seen moving in sublime grandeur like the apocalyptic angel, and all for the conversion of the world. His arrows pierce to heal, and wound to save. Uncurbed by bit or bridle, the white horse of the gospel, with this royal rider, with strength unwasted and speed undiminished, moves around the world to its subjugation and to its eternal redemption.

Ride on, thou Babe of Bethlehem; ride on, thou King of glory; ride on to the conquest of the world, till sin is banished and Christ forever enthroned—God in Christ acknowledged as the one supreme and eternal King.

Then the prophet looked, and beheld a horse that was red, and power was given to him to take peace from the earth. The red horse is a vivid representation of war—war, with garments rolled in blood and the land filled with carnage. God calls to peace and righteousness, to life and love, to heaven and happiness, by the red horse of war, the roar of artillery, the whistle of shells, the shrill sound of rifles and muskets, the gleam of a thousand swords, the groans of the dying, and the streams of human gore—all are voices crying: "Prepare to meet thy God."

Then another horse that was black, representing famine, appears to the vision of the prophet; the cry is, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hast not the oil and the wine. Want, starving want, is represented by the black horse and his rider. We may not fear famine in this land of plenty; but let the sun withhold his radiant light and heat, let the clouds cease to pour down the fruitful showers, and soon the gaunt form of famine would be stalking over the land. It may not come here, through the abundant mercy of God, and yet he may send it that no means may be left unemployed to save the lost. We know that the black horse has been seen in China and India and in many places on the Dark Continent, and that in every step he has warned a sad and suffering people to turn away from idols and turn to the living God.

Last of all, the pale horse appears in the field of vision, and death is sitting upon him, and hell follows after. The livid horse, with the stalwart form of death riding him, is sure to conquer; he enters, and there is no defense. Look at that home, how bright and happy it is. Suddenly a loving wife, a devoted daughter, a promising son, or a noble husband is taken sick. The doctor is sent for; he comes in haste. The pale horse and his rider are there. No courage, no skill can save. Soon death is in that once happy home; crape is on the door. Sadness and sorrow have taken the place of joy and mirth. Those lips are still and pale and cold, and though closed they utter a deep sad, voice. Be ready, in such an hour as you think not the Son of man cometh. Will you not listen to this voice? Will you not come at this call? You may outrun the other horses, but at last the pale horse and his rider, with the long, insatiable scythe, will mow you down. Victor he is coming; doctors cannot keep him away; he is at the door; be ready, or it will be forever too late.

Learn from all this, dear friends, that God does not desire your eternal undoing. No, no; he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him may have everlasting life. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the great Triune God, calls you by providence and grace, by death and life, by peace and war, by health and sickness, by all that is bright and joyous in heaven and all that is dark and terrible in hell, to quit the paths of sin and turn to those of holiness.

And now, with an earnestness begotten by the Spirit Divine, with a sense of responsibility solemn

as eternity itself, with a heart whose every throb is for the salvation of souls, let me beg you, dear brethren, to co-operate with the great Head of the Church and try to win souls; and let me beseech you, dear unconverted friend, no more to contend with either footmen or horses, but bow to Christ and be saved.

R.

XV. UPWARD AND OUTWARD.

“And there was an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the side chambers: . . . and so increased from the lowest chambers to the highest.” (Ezekiel xli 7.)

THIS is the prophet's vision when, guided by the angel, he surveys the temple. Standing in the center within, he beheld the structure “enlarging and winding about still upward.” This earth is God's temple, and we are being led through it. We stand in its midst to-day, and with a quickened vision life takes the form and fills the outline drawn by the prophet.

1. *God's plans and processes are upon this principle.* His conceptions have an endless enlarging. The cyclone, with its tip but touching the earth, uplifting all into its ever-expanding circle, is nature's portrait of the thought of God. Its force and its form are like the plans of God. They lift us up when they touch us, and their law is perpetual expansion. God's processes are cyclonic. Their volume never decreases. From the moment they touch the child consciousness there is an enlarging until age ends probation, and eternity unfolds the fullness of God. *Enlargement is the law.*

Physical life is upon this principle. Beginning at lower, it ascends to the higher and broader planes. A diminutive flesh and blood environment is its be-

ginning. The babe is but a pulpy, powerless little animal. It knows nothing, loves no one; but lies and kicks, and crows or cries, and feeds by instinct as other infant animals feed. But its life soon begins its enlargement. Intelligence buds. Reason begins to develop. It begins to find out and to know things. Life enlarges every day. At a certain point in the advance the moral sense begins to unfold; conscience asserts its claims; and, last and highest of all, the spiritual faculties. This life is an enlargement from the infant to the adult—physical, mental, moral. True manhood is the last and best development.

2. *Soul-life is on the same principle.* Nature always counter-currents grace. The rivers get larger as you go downward, and smaller as you go upward. The spiritual currents run upstream, and get wider as they get higher. Our last and highest possibilities being in the spiritual, we get larger as we go upward, and less as we descend.

Each succeeding chamber in the "vision temple" was larger than the one next beneath, and the largest was topmost. You may tell whether a man is growing if you but find where he lives. If he is living in the upper chambers, in the spiritual faculties, then his life is enlarging, his influence strengthening, his usefulness increasing. If he is living down in his basilar nature, in the physical, then he is growing in that department. Where his life concentrates there he grows. He gets to be more and more an animal every day. He lives as an animal, thinks as an animal, enjoys as an animal, aspires as an animal. The enlargement of such a man is an avoiron-

dupois enlargement. And the difference between the infant and the man is one hundred and eighty pounds of fluffy mortality, as determined by the grocer's scales.

3. *Life is a failure without enlargement.* God requires and expects that men shall gain in their higher nature while they have a being. He demands what we demand. We require every thing to respond to this law of enlargement. Civilization rests on it. The tardy movement of the pioneer period will not answer for the push and press of to-day. We require the farm to produce more this year than last; our factories to give off more this year than last. We require our cities to advance more this year than last; and our churches to do more than in the year past. Not merely "fruit," but "more fruit." This is the Bible demand.

4. *And we judge things by this.* If you have an animal which you cannot improve, you soon dispose of it; a tree you cannot make better, you cut it down; a farm you cannot make richer, you sell it and "go West." If you have a trade that pays no more than when you were an apprentice, you abandon it. A business that pays no more in the tenth than in the first year, you quit it. And if we are no better preachers after years of experience, then in mercy to the people we ought to quit.

5. *Thus with the Church.* The Church must shape herself to this enlargement principle, and take form of the rising temple. To do just what she did last year, and no more, is to remain at last year's size. I do not wonder that the husbandman grew impatient with the fig-tree after three successive years of fail-

ure—to feed and feed, and see no development. I have seen some pigs which you might feed from month to month, and if they did not get less, I am sure they were not perceptibly larger. The old farmers call them “*runts*.” And there is no pleasure in feeding or looking at a runt.

Let a soul or a Church eat and eat, from year to year, and get no larger or stronger—do no more than it did ten years ago, wear slick in the old ruts, make no changes, originate no new plans or enterprises—and we need not wonder if God himself grow tired of the sight. If the sight of an unthrifty animal be an offense, what divine patience is needed to perpetually feed and bear with the spiritual runthood in the Church! There are men who have grown in estate, in influence, in public favor, in experience, and in avoirdupois, have grown fat on divine grace and good fare, and yet have not grown an inch in their higher nature in ten years.

6. *This enlargement principle produces pleasure.* Where it is dominant you will find the joy forces and faculties are quick. Show me an ascending people, and I will show you a people who are singing as they go. Men never sing as they go down-hill. Your Gate City (Atlanta) is cheery and attractive because it has that magnetic charm which ever marks advancement—that spirit that wakes the joy faculties, and makes the stranger to feel a pulsing life round about him that gives pleasure. Your city will sing while she lives under this law.

But if public sentiment run down into individual selfishness, and the moral degenerate into the material, and in place of living for the elevation of all

each begins to live for himself, then will her beauty wane. Let ghoulish greed arise, and the money-god mount the morals of your city, and the ride will be rapid and rapidly down-hill.

7. *And it is as true of your soul as of your city.* When ascending, enlarging in the higher nature, the joy faculties, like the birds at day-dawn, are awake and singing. The ascending soul is the singing soul, and the soul that draws. It has magnetic power to lift men up and make them better. That soul has power that lives in a smile. The selfish man doesn't smile much. He cannot afford it; his smile might benefit some one, and he lose the per cent. on it.

8. *Variety is another law of experience.* "And there was a winding about." There were three and thirty chambers in the sides of the vision temple. These were arranged in ascending order, each higher and larger than the one next beneath it; and the approach from below was by that "winding about"—an ascent indirect, curvilinear, zigzag, full of windings.

These temple chambers illustrate the years of advance to manhood, and the windings between portray the way 'twixt life's birthdays. But lift the figure, and let "three and thirty chambers" represent the advance from conversion—from spiritual birth to manhood. The converted life is the true life. Life before this was lost life. Many would gladly forget the life "lived in the flesh." Each year has been a "winding about." Much is a mountain ascent.

Crossing the Alleghanies for the first time, we were surprised at one point to find that after making a sharp curve in a crevasse and running for a time, we had lapped about, and our train came back only a

little way across from where we had crossed before, only we were a few feet up the mountain-side. The zigzag run had gained us a few feet in the ascent. Again we were surprised when looking from the car-window we saw the clouds beneath us, and the fleecy billows floating in the sunlight far below. The train seemed as if it had taken wings and was bearing us far from earth and the elements common to life.

9. *Such is life.* We climb its mountains in a zigzag course, and much of the pilgrimage is mountain-climbing. More ranges to cross in life than in crossing a continent. We must cross a score of "Alleghanies," "Rockies," and "Sierra-Nevadas" before we get across the life-continent and out at the Golden Gate. And sometimes the life winds laboriously through some deep trial, as a train through the mountain crevasse, when the sun is obscured and we run a whole year and then find us but little away from where we were. But if we are but a few feet higher, the labor is not lost. It takes a long while to gain little in some of the steep places of life. The temple stairway was winding about, "but still upward." Life, with all its zigzag windings, may be "still upward." Hence, when your experience comes lapping back, almost repeating itself, do not be discouraged. If only you are a little less earthly and a few moral feet higher, then all is well.

10. *Again. There are hours of elevation.* Times when the life-train seems to have taken wings. The mountains are beneath, the clouds are far below, and the sunlight upon them like the reflection of heaven's gold. These are the surprises; the openings of heaven; hours on the "delectable heights," that make us

strong for the ascent of the next range in the pilgrimage.

Who has not had these transfiguration moments; times when you were out and up from the noise and sight of the sensuous; times when the car-wheels of rushing life were unheard, and you were lifted up in spirit? The natural had yielded to the supernatural, and your spirit was floating, floating away and upward to its God.

11. *These Tabor hours are needful.* The Master had need of one Tabor amid the mountain-ranges of his vicarious life. How much poor and struggling humanity needs them to give it strength! Paul, in a weak hour, was lifted to the "third heaven," and it strengthened him for fourteen years.

12. *The advance was steady and unbroken.* There was increase from the lowest chamber to the highest. This is true life, filling its true destiny. No gaps; no vacancies; no fruitless periods; no spaces upon which to look back and say, "That and that were blanks in my life." Some lands yield well if they have just the right season—the spring not too early nor too late; the season not too wet nor too dry—but if the season be a little unfriendly, there is failure. So many grow and develop in Christian life, if the season happen to hit right; if there be nothing to hinder, depress, or try them. But it is the grand life that thrusts its roots deep into the soil of truth and grows on and up despite the seasons. The drought may kill the grass and blight the fields and wilt and wither the bushes, but the grand old oaks live and grow, despite the drought. Their roots strike deeper than summer drought and take hold on

original earth. Let the roots of your faith strike deeper than circumstances or surface influences. Then each year will be an advance; each birthday will bring you to a loftier and larger chamber, a broader liberty, and grander manhood in Christ.

13. *There is grandeur in such a life.* So in league with God as to grow more beautiful at every change; larger each season; growing as grows the oak, regardless of conditions. Adversity adds to the beauty of such a life.

It is autumn now. We call it the sad season; and yet the leaves die beautifully and painlessly. How manifold and glorious the hues and tints that fall about the bed of dying nature! Like our own dear ones, the leaves are loveliest when dying. It is as if there were a glory future for the foliage, with its glintings falling back upon it as it dies.

14. *And one has beautifully said: "The falling of the leaves opens the view."* It is when the leaves have fallen that the vision opens on every hand, the air grows thin, and distant things seem so nigh. What views when the leaves are off; the mountain, the clear forms of the hills, and the houses on the far-off elevations; a thousand things visible which were before unseen!

Thus, many times, are we shut in and darkened by earth foliage. The world grows upon us, luxurious and lush, and we dwell in earth shade, like the dense foliage of summer, and see little beyond ourselves. But when the frosts fall, when adversity comes, when these things quietly fade and fall as the autumn foliage, then the vision clears and the views enlarge; then we see the far-off hills, the heavenly mansion, the clear outlines of "*our Father's house.*" M.

XVI. THE RESURRECTION. AN EASTER SERMON.

“I am the resurrection.” (John xi. 25.)

SUCH is the strong metaphorical language used by Christ to illustrate his relation to the great truth of the resurrection. He is the Author and Founder of the resurrection.

Of course we have to depend upon the teachings of holy writ for our proof of this cardinal doctrine of Christianity; but it is the beauty of our holy religion that its teachings are all sustained by the analogies of nature. Truth cannot be inconsistent with itself. Harmony universally exists between the voice of God as heard in nature and as repeated in revelation. It is to this striking analogy that we refer for our first proof of the resurrection of the human body.

The rising of the sun after a night of darkness is a literal resurrection—a rising again. A man created and awaking to life, with all his powers matured, would enjoy the glory of a cloudless day. Every thing around him would fill him with a sense of the majesty of creation. The blue vault of heaven, the glorious king of day pursuing his shining course from east to west, illuminating mountain and valley, and the whole visible world around him, with trees and shrubs and flowers, all sparkling beneath the rays

of the king of day, would most deeply impress him. Still more forcibly would he be impressed with the animate creation—with flocks and herds, with birds and beasts roaming the earth or cleaving the air, and thus giving variety and animation to the scene. But when the sun ceased to shine, and night hung her dark curtain over the earth, a solemn dread might fill him, and he might wonder if the light would never shine again. Knowing nothing of the laws of nature, and unacquainted with the regular succession of day and night, he might, and would naturally, suppose that the sun had gone down never to rise again, and that he would never again see his face or enjoy his light. Anxious and sorrowful, he would naturally look for a perpetual night which would forever shut out from his vision all the glories of the day which had filled his soul with such rapture. But when the night had passed, and the rising dawn foretold the coming of another, hope would revive and he would look with joyous expectancy for the rising sun to chase the last remains of darkness away. And as the sun appeared—first the outer rim, and then one-half of his brilliant face, and then the whole disk all shining in full-orbed glory—he would cry out from the depths of his heart, and with joy in every feature and in every intonation of his voice he would shout aloud, “Risen again! risen again!” So it is, after every night of storm or calm, of sorrow or mirth, of gloom or gladness, God promises the doctrine of the resurrection by the rising again of the material sun. How hopefully is this rising of the sun looked for by the storm-swept mariner, who has passed a perilous night upon the dashing bil-

lows of the deep. The storm sweeps, the winds wail, the billows threaten; darkness reigns, and hope bids watch and wait.

It is said of Philip, king of Macedon, that he employed a page whose daily business it was to say to him: "Philip, thou art mortal." So God employs his messenger, the great center of revolving worlds, to proclaim not that man is mortal, but that he is immortal, and that if he dies he shall live again, and that the night of death shall be followed by the cloudless splendors of the resurrection morning.

Again, the truth of the resurrection is proclaimed by the return of spring after the cold winter. When winter comes, and earth puts on her snowy garments, then vegetation ceases to flourish, flowers fade, fruits decay, all growth is arrested, seeds lie dormant, hibernating animals seek their dens, and birds of passage fly away to sunny climes. The fruitful soil is fast bound in fetters of ice, forbidding plant or flower to peep its head above the silent grave in which it is buried. But when winter is over and past, and every thing assumes a new aspect, the resurrection of spring comes on; birds sing, the turtle-dove cooes, plants grow, flowers bloom, hills and valleys glow with life and sparkle with praise. The icy fetters of winter are broken asunder by the warming beams of the sun in spring-time, and frost and snow disappear before his shining face. So shall death disappear before the face of the Sun of righteousness in the great morning of the resurrection. Thus in every revolving year, as the death of winter is followed by the life of spring, as roses bloom, and flowers of every hue display their beauties and shed their fragrance abroad,

nature proclaims in every rising plant and swelling bud and unfolding leaf and opening flower, the grand truth of the resurrection. Paul, in his inspired teaching of the resurrection in 1 Cor. xv., employs the figure of a grain of wheat quickened into life and growing with a new body after its death. So in the growth of every vegetable, from the mighty oak which has resisted the storms of a hundred winters, to the tiniest plant that grows, does the God of nature proclaim the resurrection of the dead.

The beautiful illustration given by Bishop Butler is familiar to nearly all. The silk-worm weaves its shroud and passes into the cold embrace of death, and there it remains for months. But lo! a change comes. It bursts the cerements of death. The crawling worm becomes a beautiful insect with painted wings and glowing beauty. It disdains the earth and crawls no more. The hairy, disgusting, earth-born worm rises on airy wings and soars aloft. It no longer feeds on garbage, but sips nectar from every opening flower. What a change! Is it indeed the same crawling caterpillar? It is; and yet how changed! With what body has it risen! In what brilliant colors does it shine! The same, and yet not the same.

Thus it will be in the resurrection. We are sown in dishonor, we shall be raised in glory; we are sown in weakness, we shall be raised in power. Thus it is that God hath made ministers of winged insects, which come trooping in spring-time, like so many angels clad in robes of beauty to proclaim the glory of God and the resurrection of man.

There are also analogies in the spiritual world which,

properly understood, teach the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Regeneration is a moral resurrection. The soul is raised from the death of sin to the life of God in Christ. The man once dead in trespasses and sins is made alive by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. He wakes up in the Divine likeness. It is indeed a resurrection! He has a new heart. New emotions, sweet sympathies, high aspirations, noble resolves, holy joys cause him to feel that a change from darkness to light, from death to life, from flesh to spirit has been wrought in his inner nature. He was dead, but is alive again; was lost, but is found. He breathes a new atmosphere, moves on a higher plane, and rejoices with renewed hopes. Old things have passed away, and all things have become new. He has been taken from the grave of sin, and with his grave-clothes removed he is sitting clothed and in his right mind. In the conversion of every sinner the God of grace teaches us that the resurrection is not a myth, but a glorious reality. To these voices of the God of nature and the God of grace revelation gives a hearty and harmonious response. "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living." Sad are the words of Jesus to the Sadducees when they were endeavoring to show the absurdity of the resurrection. The Master ever proclaimed boldly the truth of the resurrection, but in the passage quoted he refers to Moses as admitted authority among Sadducees, and by that authority established his doctrine and silenced their cavilings. Job proclaims the same

truth with language at once startling, original, and sublime: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my *flesh* shall I see God." Isaiah, in his own beautiful and poetic style, declares: "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Daniel proclaims: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." In Hosea we read: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death." Paul says: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" And Jesus, in our text, proclaims: "I am the resurrection and the life." It is, then, in this passage that he bases the whole doctrine of the resurrection upon the fact of his resurrection. By man came death; and by man came the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Christ is risen, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

Christ's risen body was the same and yet not the same in which he suffered. The suffering body was mortal; the resurrection body is immortal. It was sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. And yet it was so identical with the natural body as not only to impart the consciousness of identity to the Saviour, but it was duly recognized by his disciples. It would be no resurrection if there were no identity; and the resurrection would be without value if it brought back all

the infirmities of the mortal body. The flesh and blood are transformed in the resurrection. The natural body shall be a spiritual body, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. In the resurrection we shall know ourselves and shall know each other—just as Jesus knew himself and was known by his disciples. We may not fathom all the mysteries of the resurrection; but this must neither weaken the Christian's faith nor lessen his joy. The resurrection of Christ is an established fact, and established by the strongest possible evidence. It cannot be disproved. Such testimony was never before adduced to establish a miracle. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then no reliance can be placed on human testimony. For here we have witnesses numerous, independent, capable, honest, unselfish to such an extent as to testify to their own injury. If they cannot be believed none can. If, then, the resurrection of Christ is an established fact, our own resurrection is assured. If you ask, With what body do they come? I answer, With the same body, only made like Christ's glorious body.

Of the resurrection of Christ the Easter Sabbath is a perpetual monument, and of our resurrection it is a glorious prophecy. Monumental, it proclaims Christ the resurrection and the life; prophetic, it inspires his followers with the highest hopes and holiest raptures.

R.

XVII.

JACOB'S WELL:

A COMMUNION SERMON.

"Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."
(John iv. 11.)

HERE is a sinner looking at the visible, and wondering at the words of a stranger. Here is the Saviour looking through the visible, and trying to lead her to apprehend the invisible. This old well had refreshed the thirsty and wayworn of the centuries, and now becomes type of that "Living Water" which is to satisfy and make glad through the ages to come.

1. *Obstacles to sight are aids to faith.* This famous well was more than a hundred feet deep, with only a few feet of water. Supposing the stranger to refer to this water, the woman argued the impossibility because of the depth. "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." She could not see (what unbelief requires) the processes and the connections; how he was to obtain that water, which was a hundred feet down in the earth, with neither bucket to dip nor cord to draw. She must have a basis for her faith laid in mechanics. This is the mistake of many—putting the faith-life down in the sphere of mechanics and on the plane of science and the visible, and then asking, "How can these things be?"

We want to see the *how* of every thing we ask of

God. If we can get mechanical reckonings—the depth of the well, the length of the cord, and the soundness of the bucket—then we determine what to believe about getting the water. Thus we set our faith, as we would a trap, in the mechanics of the thing; and when we can't see the mechanism we don't have the faith.

Asking for the restoration of a sick loved one, we think of the nature of the disease and the skill of the physician; asking for revival, we think of the condition of the Church and the power of the preacher; and if asking for rain, we think of the phase of the moon and the state of the atmosphere. Too much of our faith is in our eyes and ears and hands. When we go to God for blessing we want something to carry in our hands, as the Oriental would carry his bucket and rope; and if we have nothing, then we stand and doubt and say, "I have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."

2. *The deepness is the aid to true faith.* That which staggers mechanical faith supports a true faith. True faith only wants to know that "the well is deep;" that it will not strike bottom." Faith deals in deep things, and doesn't ask about the *how*. Moses marches Israel down between the hills and to the Red Sea banks, and doesn't ask how they are to cross. Abraham lays Isaac upon the altar and lifts the steel to slay him, and doesn't ask how he is to be delivered. Elijah stands on Carmel, in the face of six hundred priests, and has the twelve barrels of water poured over his altar, and doesn't ask how it is to be fired.

All that faith, genuine faith, wishes to know is that there is a well-fountain, and that it is deep—too deep

for mechanical measurement by feet and inches; too deep to be sounded, by visible cords; too deep for exhaustion; deep enough to meet the wants and slake the soul-thirst of humanity.

3. *We are now at the well.* This sacrament spread before us is a well-fountain, and it is deep. "There is a spring of fresh-water in the Atlantic Ocean, off the Matanzas Inlet and three miles from shore. It is always in commotion, and it covers half an acre of space. The ocean there is thirty-six feet in depth, but this spring is fathomless." This sacrament is the fresh-water fountain, the Matanzas well-spring in the ocean of life; and it is fathomless—ten thousand cords can never sound it. Like the Matanzas fountain, it is deeper than the ocean-bed. Tie all your griefs and disappointments and distresses together and sink them here, and it is but the child's effort to sound the sea. How blessed, when voyage-worn, seasick, and athirst, to cast anchor hard by this Matanzas fountain and drink to the comfort of the soul! Let every heavy, hurting heart sink its sorrows here this morning, and drink, and take courage for the future voyage.

4. *Life is a surface-ocean.* The atonement is the great ocean beneath the ocean, and while the shallow life-ocean is rock-reefed, storm-swept, and billow-beaten, the great atonement-ocean underlies it, and its living waters burst their way up and through the life-ocean, and the voyagers come ever and anon to the Matanzas fountains. We are anchored this hour at one of these fountains, as it breaks through the surface of things in this stormy life. We reach these fountains at the opening Sabbath of each month.

We have had a month of rough sailing, with some experiences, like the sea-water, too salt to be palatable or pleasant. But to-day we rest. Like Israel under the palms and by the wells of Elim, we rest and take of "living water." Here we come into that fellowship that includes the Church of the first-born.

5. *Hers were words of doubt.* "Thou hast nothing to draw with." Jesus said: "If thou hadst known who it is that asketh drink of thee, thou wouldest have asked of him." Ah, if we could always know with whom we are talking! When we are in controversy with misfortune, trial, or loss, if we only knew who it is speaking with us through these things, then would we cease to *argue* and begin to *ask*. "If thou hadst known, thou wouldest have asked," and not argued. That woman talked to him of well, cord, and bucket because she did not know him. But when she knew him but a little she forgot her own pitcher and went to tell her friends of him as the Christ. How it lifts us out of the lower and the doubtful when we find that God is speaking with us! A thousand times we have fought with what we thought was ill fate, and have been impatient and fretful and rebellious when, had we known who it was in controversy with us, we had been praying; and, like this woman, forgetting the world's pitchers and cords and buckets, we had risen to communion with him and hastened to tell others of the Messiah.

6. *She found Christ unawares.* A thousand times, it may be, she had trod the path to that old well. The presence of weary footmen there was no new thing. Little thought she of finding God at the well that day; still less would she think that the dusty

stranger were he. How God lets us find him sometimes when least we look! Reading an old, familiar chapter—have read it a hundred times—suddenly there is light, and we see God in the word, and hear him say, “I that speak with thee am he.” A friend comes; we talk together of Christ; as heart responds to heart we become conscious of a third presence, and though we do not speak to him we grow silent, and our eyes grow dewy while he speaks to us in language that causes “our hearts to burn within us.” Walking the pavement, where we have passed for years; in the place of business, where we have been daily—suddenly there is a sense of an unseen presence, and we realize that God is in that place. How blessed are the common places of life when we know the presence and hear the voice of the “Son of man!”

7. *Empty hands* are the hands to place upon the well-sweep of grace. You could not handle the well-sweep with the “old oaken bucket” at your childhood home when your hands were full of other things. You laid down what you had in your hands and took hold on the old sweep empty-handed. So you draw best now from the “wells of salvation” when you come empty-handed. “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” He succeeds who comes saying: “In my hands no price I bring.” Let a man come to the well of life with his rope of self-righteousness or self-worthiness or good works, and he will find the well too deep. If he expect to reach the “living water” with all his self-excellences linked together, no drop from that well shall ever pass his lips; but whoso cometh with simple faith shall find access—“For the just shall

live by faith," "walk by faith," breathe by faith, and draw and drink from "salvation's wells" by faith.

We stand now by this sacramental well, deep as divine love, from which the "sacramental hosts" have drank; and though we are empty-handed and have nothing with which to draw, yet we shall drink, because we are not in controversy with him; but are here to "ask," and he is here to "give us of that living water, of which if a man drink he shall never thirst."

M. .

XVIII.

THE WORK MUST GO ON.

“I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease?” (Neh. vi. 3.)

TO Nehemiah a great work had been committed. It was nothing less than the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. The work was both difficult and dangerous. The people were both poor and discouraged. The temptations to desist were numerous and strong. Nehemiah remained firm to his purpose, and trusted in the great and “terrible” God to whom he prayed day and night. With a sword and a trowel he kept at his work; “with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.” The work was great and large; the laborers were separated upon the wall one far from the other; each one slept in his clothes, so as to be ready either to work or to fight. Then came his powerful enemies, and asked Nehemiah to come down and meet with them in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. This was the reply: “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?”

We believe that the difficulty and danger of rebuilding the walls is a type of the danger and difficulty of doing the work of Christ in building of his Church. It is true that the type is material while the antetype is spiritual—the former relates to visi-

ble enemies, and the latter to invisible and spiritual foes. This difference is almost universal. In this discussion we note the great work to which all Christians are called. It was a great work to build up the fallen walls of Jerusalem, but it is a greater one to build up the Church of God, to advance the cause of the Redeemer, to save souls from death, and to hide a multitude of sins.

It is great in that it involves the greatest principles that ever controlled human action. To save man put in exercise the highest attributes of the Deity and called up all the highest principles of the Divine Government.

'Twas great to speak the world from naught;

'Twas greater to redeem.

Justice and mercy were both active in man's redemption. Wisdom and power combined and threw a halo of glory around this grandest work of the great and terrible God. But it is not to the work of God, but to that performed by man that our text has reference.

It is great in that its ends are the greatest that can possibly be conceived by human intelligence. These ends are all to make a man wiser and better here and to prepare him for eternal happiness in the world to come. Surely it is a great work to turn man from sin to holiness, from Satan to God, from hell to heaven. It is a great work to lift man from the filth and mire of sin to the joys and bliss of the children of God. To enlighten the mind is indeed a great and noble work, but it is much greater to save a soul from the worm that never dies and from the fires that are never quenched; for at the last, consider the work of the individual Christian in whatever light you will,

it resolves itself into this: It is to save his own soul and, at the same time, help to save the souls of others. This is the sum and substance of all Christian labor. If a work of benevolence is discharged, it is always hoped that the charity, while it relieves the body, may be the means of saving the soul. The salvation of the soul is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, of all Christian endeavor, whether organized or individual, whether it is seen in the building of a church, the erection of a hospital, the establishment of an orphan asylum, or in teaching an infant class in a Sunday-school.

It is, then, a great work, whether it is considered in reference to time or to eternity, to the soul's value or the soul's destiny, to the work itself or to its design or its final result.

The manner of performing the work by Nehemiah may also be regarded as typical. He fought and worked. He had a sword on his side, with a weapon in one hand and a trowel in the other. It was a double work—a work of resistance and of progress. He resisted all overtures to desist, and went forward with his work in spite of all opposition and of all inducements to quit. That is exactly the way for a Christian to work. He must be brave. He must stand firm and strong against all the attacks of the enemy. Neither threats on the one hand nor flattery on the other must lessen his ardor or abate his efforts. Brave as a lion, courageous as the tiger, and yet truthful as a saint, he must work on and work ever until, released from duty, he receives his reward.

Unflinching firmness must characterize all workers for Christ. No weakness must show itself in the

character of one who wears the badge of the Christian. Firmer than the mountain oak which has resisted the storms of a century, and stronger than the barriers which have stood for thousands of years unmoved by the dashing waves of old ocean, should the Christian worker stand against all the rushing tides of iniquity which try his strength or assail his lofty principles.

The Christian worker must be constant. He must not allow the work to cease. He must not come down from it, but must stay on the walls by day and night, always ready for the great and good work committed to his hands. The work must not stop. Nehemiah says that in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem the workmen did not put off their clothes except for the washing, so intent were they upon their work. In business or at leisure, at home or abroad, alone or in company, the Christian must carry on his work. Some seem to think that the work of the Lord must be done only on the Sabbath. This is far from the truth. No man must have a business which does not harmonize with Christian duty. So to business unite God's service. Be instant in season and out of season. Bring your whole worldly business into close connection with the work of the Lord. Make God your partner; let him have control, supreme control in every transaction. Then you can serve him in selling goods, in attending a patient, in defending a client, in shoving the plane, in driving the wagon, or in following the plow; you can serve him while plying the busy needle, running the machine, or in attending to any of the cares of house-keeping. God should be served whether you sweep the house, wash the clothes, cook the food, or tend the babe.

This work for Christ implies thorough and unselfish consecration. Consecrate yourselves now and forever to God and his holy service. Lay all upon God's altar; let nothing be kept back. Time and talents, home and loved ones, with self and all its belongings, must be included in the one act of consecration. The sword and the trowel must be surrendered to him and used only in his service. God wants no divided service; you cannot serve God and mammon. Fidelity to every principle of right, to God and man, for all time, is essential to acceptable work for the Master. Fidelity to the sword and to the trowel must be engraved on the conscience and be embodied in the whole life. Fidelity must glow in the feelings, determine in the will, and shine like the sun in the whole life. It must wave on the banner, which, still high advanced, floats above the clouds, and has fidelity shining on its ample folds. It is the motto of the good man, and adds to the attractiveness of youth and gives dignity to old age. With fidelity governing both husband and wife marriage cannot be a failure, and love is the very vestibule of heaven. It meets responsibility, pays honest debts, complies with sacred promises, secures confidence in business, honors God in all things, and is the richest benediction to all within the range of its godlike influence. It does not parley with the tempter; it resists the devil, and he flees. It says *Work*, and work is done. It commands, Fight the good fight of faith, and the fight is fought to the end and to complete victory.

All God's people should be united in this good work. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not envy Ephraim. Let there be no strife be-

tween me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we be brethren. Yes, all Christians are brethren, and strife is ruinous to the Lord's work. We are as different corps in the same army. A strife between us is as injurious to our holy cause as contention between two companies in the same regiment. United we stand. Let all the various branches of the Church of Christ be united as one man, to advance his cause and bring all sinners to his feet, and the world would be shaken as by a great spiritual earthquake. A new era would dawn. Ethiopia would stretch forth its hands to God; the isles would know his love; the desert would rejoice; Sahara would bloom; the mountains would break forth into song, and all the trees of the forest would clap their hands.

In union is strength and, more than that, in union is success—is victory, complete and eternal. If to-day all denominations of Christians could unite to oppose sin, to advance holiness, to glorify Christ, and to save sinners, a new light as bright as Bethlehem's Star would shine, and the cross of Christ would control the world.

Nehemiah united the scattered, impoverished, discouraged people of God, and, in spite of Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem and all their adherents, the work was done, and Jerusalem arose from the dust like a bride adorned for her husband. Let us be united, brethren beloved, and then we shall see our spiritual Jerusalem arise from the dust and become the joy and praise of all the earth.

Then, we must work with a will. Nehemiah says of his people: The people had a mind to work. To that fact he largely ascribes their success. We must

not be laggards. There must be no complainers. It is the grandest work that ever employed God or angels. Then, let the people have a mind to work; let there be no dismay. Go with a warm heart and a burning zeal; with a will as inflexible as right, as immutable as truth, and as fixed as the stars of heaven; go forward until you shall come forth shouting, Grace, grace, unto it. Let nothing dishearten you, nothing weaken your purpose, or quench the celestial flame that burns in your bosom. Your cause is good, your purpose noble, your courage is heroic, and your guide and support is the great and good God. Then, have a mind to the work, and all the vile opposition of men or devils will be as toy pop-guns employed to beat down the fortress of Gibraltar. Up, and on to the completion of the grandest work ever entrusted to angels or to men!

Then, all this work must be accompanied by prayer. So was it with Nehemiah. His prayers, as recorded by himself, flame with indignation against his enemies and are full of faith in the "great and terrible God." It is God's work. The city is his; the walls are his; the people are his. He prays: "Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head. . . . So built we the wall." So we must pray. Answer derision with prayer. Oppose satire, sophism, passion, ignorance, prejudice, all, with humble, earnest prayer, and your work shall be done, and well done, and then God shall have all the praise.

No Christian can afford to do any work upon which he cannot pray for the blessing of God. Ask the blessing of God upon all your business, provided that

business is legitimate and perfectly honest; but especially should you pray that God may bless every seed that you sow and every work that you perform to build up his cause and bless the souls of others. Ask, and ye shall receive. Pray with holy fervor and with undoubting trust; pray with the assurance that God will bless you every time you say a word or perform an act for the sake of the true and the good.

Persevere unto the end; stand by your work until called from work to rest. Not only stand, but do; do with all your might. Strike to the death of wrong and for the growth of all that is pure and good, and strike till he shall say, It is enough; come up higher.

Do all your work with implicit and unceasing faith. Trust in the Lord; claim his promises; lean upon him with perfect assurance that he will bear you up in his hands and carry you on his bosom. Falter not; doubt not; fail not. He will be your God, and you shall be his child. Do duty, and leave all in the hands of Him who doeth all things well.

After your labor rest will be so sweet;
After the fight victory will be complete.
Work on, fight on, till the shout shall rise,
And angels shall welcome you high in the skies.

R.

XIX. THE WATER WAIF.

"And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water." (Exodus ii. 1-10.)

THERE is a novel interest in the history of every babe. Each is born a king or queen in the home, and rules supreme for a season. Many of us were more distinguished as babes than ever afterward. Here is a babe that has made history enough at the age of twelve weeks to thrill the world. And we have but

to note this baby biography to see how wonderfully God's providence moves along the lines of life's common affairs, meeting and watching our faith and effort.

1. *We must have faith as a basis of action.* And God always gives ground for confidence and trust. He intended to save this babe from the bloody edict of the king, and to do it through the agency of its mother. But how is she to know this? What sign shall she have of God's intention? He puts the sign in the face of the babe—a fairness and beauty almost divine. Tradition says: "His beauty was such that passers-by would stop and linger to look, and workmen would leave their work to come and steal a glance at the wonderful babe."

God can write his designs anywhere. He hinted his design in the beauty of the infant Moses, in the early strength of Samson, in the early prowess of David, and in the early piety of Samuel. And if God write his favor on the face of a child, you may expect the mother to read it. Other things may go unnoticed and unread, but that which is stamped upon the face of the babe the mother's eye will detect. Moses's mother read the divine intention when she "saw that he was a goodly child;" and when she saw this, "she hid him three months." Not that she would have consented to his destruction had he not been thus comely, but she would have had no hope or inspiration to try to save him from the king's decree. She saw in his face the touch of God, that which kindled her faith and inspired her hope of saving him.

Many a poor mother since that has detected promise enough in the face of her own babe to save her from despair.

2. *There must be response to Divine intimation.* God's hints are hints to watchfulness and work; hints to do something. So the mother of Moses understood it, and proceeded at once to hide the babe. It may have been, perhaps was, at the risk of her own life and those of the household; but she had seen God's intention in the face of the child, and was ready for the risk. Indeed, there is no risk where God leads. Though we collide with kings' decrees there is no harm to result.

3. *She combines sagacity with faith.* And you know what a woman's wit is when the life of her child is involved. Observe, she did all the planning; no mention of the husband and father in the whole transaction. "So she hid him three months," as long as she could. No blind and inactive dependence upon God to keep him concealed, and to do what she could do herself. But now she can hide him no longer, what must be done? What does she do? Let the executioners come and find him, and leave it to God to work a miracle to save him? Not until she has done all she can for his further preservation. "So she took for him an ark of bulrushes." She made a basket—made it herself. And do you not suppose there was painstaking with that piece of wicker-work? She trusted no other, but made it with her own hands, "and daubed it with slime and with pitch." I dare say there was not a defective reed in that basket; and the cement was well worked and closely put in. That was one basket not "made to sell." Not much chance for leaking when she had finished it. The baby sailor had, at least, a water-proof boat; and when complete, she fixed a lid upon it in such manner that the little

seaman would neither rock nor struggle out of his boat. And this lid had to be removed by some effort before the princess who found him could get sight of his face.

4. *She allows no one to come between her and God.* All is now ready; will she not call the babe's father that he, with stronger arms, may carry the little one away? Not so. She admits no one between her and the unseen hand.

Had Amram started with the basket, half-scared and with awkward and suspicious movement, he would have been detected. It required the noiseless gliding, the almost spirit-like movement of a woman and a mother to perform this dangerous feat. What would a man do on such an enterprise? A creature made up principally of awkwardness and fuss, a man cannot walk across a sick-room or shut a door without jarring the entire building. So the Book tells us that she took the basket herself and "carried it to the river-side."

"A kind man was gathering up the poor children in the vicinity of the 'Five Points,' in the city of New York, and was carrying them out to the West and procuring homes for them. A number had been found and arrangement was made to leave with them on a certain morning. The children were brought to the appointed place the previous night. Among them came a poor woman with her child, and asked to be allowed to undress the little one and put it to sleep, and then to sit by it through the night that she might have the privilege of taking it up and dressing it for the last time before it was taken away."

Something of this feeling, I dare say, was in the

heart of Moses's mother as she went to the Nile-brink to leave her babe upon the waters. But she did it "by faith." Faith can carry a heavy heart and an awful burden, and yet walk steadily. She has done all; she is now at her extremity; she has reached out into the darkness before her as far as she can, and just there she met God. As she reached that precious basket out upon the waters it was as if she felt God's finger-tips touch hers; and she knew that as it passed from hers it slipped into that unseen hand that controls the waters and the waves. But for this she would have staid there and died with her babe. No mother could thus leave her child and go back to her home except God were with her. But she went silently away. No outcry—not so much as a moan or sigh. *Beautiful lesson!* Do all you can, go as far as you can. Then leave all to God, and walk steadily and cheerfully on.

2. *How God meets such faith and work.* Not always by miraculous intervention, but most frequently by simply ordering the common-place things of every-day life. The princess and maids came walking down by the river-side. She sees the ark and sends her maid to fetch it. God is along with that company in that stroll by the river. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord," and so were the eyes of that princess. And God directed her eyes when they fell on that bulrush basket.

And when it was brought and opened, there was the babe in the basket. God was in that basket, too; and he made the babe cry just at that time. He is in the weeping of a babe. He was in the heart of the princess and touched her womanly sympathy,

and I suspect she cried also. "And she said, This is one of the Hebrews' children." Child of one of the poor slaves in my father's brick-yards. Nothing uncommon about this. Nothing that seems miraculous here. All is simple and natural as life, while God's providence, like a thread of silver, is running through the entire story, fastening one thing to another to complete the design.

3. *No bungling here.* He sends the right one always, and at the right time. There might have come a thousand other noble women along by that river, and found that babe, and cried over it, and felt sympathy for it, and not one of the number could have saved it. But the king's daughter, the only woman in the realm who had power to save the little waif, she comes, and God moves her heart for the child's rescue.

But yonder stands another member of the providential circle—a little lass, and her name is Miriam. She has been watching from afar to see what would become of her baby brother. God has something to do with her, and something for her to do. There is a niche for the children in the frame-work of providence.

Miriam comes up, as if surprised, to see what has been found. The princess says: "It is a child of the Hebrews." Then said the little girl: "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And she bade her go. And she went and called the child's mother; and I should not wonder if she was in prayer when Miriam came to call her. Had your child been on the waters, 'mid the flags and the crocodiles, you would have been in prayer. But why is she called?

To hear that the babe is drowned, or devoured by the river monsters? That it has been found and order given to destroy it? Not so, but to hear that it lives, is well, is found by the king's daughter, loved by her, and she desires you to take him and nurse him for her. Moses was one babe who got the right nurse. No woman on earth would have cared for him as tenderly as the one whom Miriam called.

4. *The return of the trust.* "Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take the child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." Here God returns the reward of her trust. As if he had said: "You took care of the babe as long as you could, and when you could keep him no longer you came and handed him out to me on the Nile. So I have had charge of the wicker-boat and its treasure; have preserved it from all harm, and I now return it in better condition than when I took it from your hand. You gave him to me under the edict of death. I return him free from that edict. I took him, the child of a persecuted Hebrew. I return him under the king's protection, the adopted of his own daughter. No longer obscure; no longer a fugitive and flying from death." *Again.* "You have nursed him for nothing from the day of his birth. Now, I pay you the wages of a princess to nurse your own child." If there was ever improvement made on a case of trust, that was the case.

5. *The lessons.* They are very plain and simple. That old basket is full of gospel. Some old things about the home call up divers and tender memories; but this old Hebrew basket has more than a mere touching story. It has living lessons for life.

First. It teaches that God's providence plays, like invisible electric streams, along the lines of daily life. We are to remember that each day, with its work, is incorporate with the divine and the unseen. Men think God has little to do with them except on Sundays. He has less to do with men on Sunday than any other day. Bearing in mind that God has part with us in each day, will make the experience of each day, in some sense, sacramental.

Second. We are to do full duty, and leave nothing for providence to do that we can do for ourselves. Some people live as if they expected providence to do all. But providence is never "to let" in this manner. Providence does not serve as Bridget or Barney, while we nap and do nothing.

Here has been sad mistake. Leaving all to providence, and expecting providence to do what was never promised nor intended. Providence made us to help ourselves, and to help him. Eyes, hands, feet, brain, all the powers are given to meet our own demands and do his work, and when these are exhausted, can do no more, then his providence is bound to come to our aid. His is a supplemental work, "a help in time of need."

Finally. We note the payment. Faith investments always pay. God always improves the stock placed in his hands. Insurance companies, land improvement companies, and trust companies often depreciate and collapse. But I have never known anything to depreciate under the management of the living God. Moses went into that basket a slave; he came out a prince. He went in under sentence; he came out the heir of freedom.

Do all you can to save your children; and when you have done all, then trust them over to God, who will "keep them by his power." And as He paid the mother of Moses to nurse her own child, so will he pay you, in life's later years, for your care and toil in training your children for Him. "Train them for *Me*, and I will give thee thy wages."

You shall see them, when you are in life's evening, princes and princesses in the household of God. And as the parents of Moses saw their son the adopted of royalty, may you, as parents, rejoice in the adoption of your children into the family of the living God.

M.

XX.

THE WHEELS IN EZEKIEL'S VISION.

"Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides; and they turned not when they went. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four." (Ezekiel i. 15-18.)

WE have chosen this vision of the great prophet Ezekiel that we may be the better able to illustrate the providence of God. The atheist tells us, "There is no God," and of course no providence. According to the theory of atheism there is an endless succession of cause and effect, but no great guiding mind to determine result. All things are bound fast in fate. His views are as destitute of light and comfort as they are contrary to reason and opposed to common sense.

Superstition recognizes Providence only in the marvelous. Frightened by the sweep of the cyclone, the flash of the lightning, the roar of the thunder, the tread of the earthquake, the desolation wrought by the mysterious plague, it sees a terrible Providence in these displays, which seem to be the offspring of the wrath of some imaginary deity. But it sees no hand lifting the curtains of night and caus-

ing the light of the morning to break over land and sea ; no providence in the gentle shower or sparkling dew, in the blooming lily or sweet-scented rose, in heaven or earth, unless disturbed by some extraordinary exhibition of Divine power.

The agnostic knows nothing, and hence believes nothing. He gropes in darkness, bewildered by his own ignorance, and walks neither by sight nor by faith. The fact is, he does not walk at all, but, like the blind cyclops in his cavern, he gropes in darkness unutterable and impenetrable.

The Christian sees God in all things and providence everywhere, in the dark as in the light, in the common as in the extraordinary, in the calm as in the storm, in the falling sparrow as in the revolving world.

Atheism would put out the sun and be forever inclosed in impenetrable darkness. Superstition would let the sun remain extinguished, and would light up the firmament with flaming meteors or blazing comets. Agnosticism would close the eyes to all light, whether coming in effulgence from the glorious king of day or in sudden and evanescent flashes from a shower of meteors or the trail of a comet.

Christianity would let all lights shine, and would look with open eyes and trusting faith upon all the displays of power, wisdom, and goodness as evincing the attributes of God and his presence in all things. Possibly in no other passage of the Bible is there such a presentation of Providence as in this vision, which we will now attempt to analyze.

1. The wheels are on the earth, showing that God extends his providence to this little planet. He

does not confine himself or his providence to vast and distant worlds, or to heaven and its inhabitants. He is watching the earth and causing it to revolve in its orbit with a regularity at once perfect and astonishing—a regularity which has undergone no change for thousands of years.

2. The appearance of the wheels and their work was as the color of a beryl. Beryl was a precious stone of a deep sea-green color, and is possibly taken here for the sea itself. Some commentators would so translate the Hebrew. But whether the word be translated the sea or the beryl representing the sea, the meaning is the same. The color is such as to prevent a clear transparent view. You cannot see to the depths of the sea. You know not what may be concealed beneath the waves. So it is with Providence. It is mysterious. No human eye has ever yet penetrated to its dark, mysterious depths. Life is a mystery, and death is a mystery. Some lives are as bright as the smooth flow of a crystal stream sparkling in the summer sunshine, while others are as dark and sunless as the gloomy shades of the fabled Erebus. One path is sown with thorns, another with flowers. One sails upon the sea without a ripple upon its calm surface, and another is dashed by storms from the moment his boat is launched until he makes the landing on the other shore, or is wrecked in mid ocean. And still another is sometimes in calms and then in storms, sometimes sailing beneath a clear sky and then beneath dark and threatening clouds. One nation is born amid perils, and pursues a long career of honor and prosperity; another begins its life beneath a cloudless sky and

closes it before the sun sets amid scenes of disaster and blood. One family is not disturbed by the presence of death for full half a century, and another loses member after member—each one exciting the liveliest hopes just to be crushed by the last silent messenger. A bright and promising boy, with vigorous nerve and strong muscle, just budding into a noble young manhood, is borne by sorrowing friends to an untimely grave. A sweet and lovely girl, gentle as a lamb, musical as a bird, bright as a fresh-blown rose, is suddenly attacked by sickness, and amid throes of agony meets the dreaded monster, which has hung so many homes with mourning and broken so many hearts with grief. A young husband, the support of a noble, confiding, loving wife, closes a manly life long before he has reached the meridian. His sun sets before, *long before*, its noon. A young wife is torn from the loving heart of a devoted husband and laid away beneath the sweetest flowers in the silent, lonely house of death, there to rest until the general resurrection. There are mysteries which we may not attempt to explain. Truly, Providence is like the deep, blue sea. Into its depths no eye of philosopher or seer has ever yet been able to penetrate. It is a mystery, and so to continue until the light of eternity shall sweep away its darkness and make every dispensation bright as the face of the unclouded sun and more transparent than the sea of glass spread out before the throne.

3. They four had one likeness. Providence is uniform. It is not controlled by passion, but by principle. It is as the four wheels of a great chariot, all moving in unison. One great purpose rules

the Divine mind, and, whether he creates or whether he destroys, he means to accomplish the same great end; whether he speaks in the thunder or whispers in the zephyr; whether he flashes in the lightning or rays out in the calm sunshine; whether his voice is heard in fearful curses from Mount Ebal or in gentle blessings from Gerizim, he seeks alone the good of his creatures and the greatest happiness to the greatest number. To the eye of faith there is but one likeness to all the wheels of Providence.

4. Providence is complicated. It is a wheel in the middle of a wheel. The complications of Divine providence are astounding. You have visited a cotton factory, and have seen the silken fleece deprived of its seeds, converted into soft rolls, turned into thread, and manufactured into cloth, and all by wheels working together in a very complicated manner. It was wheel within wheel, the working of which was so complicated as to baffle the understanding and almost make the head grow dizzy. Such and so many are the complications of Providence that an archangel may fail to unravel them as the rapid movements of the intervolved wheels baffle even his keen vision.

5. This Providence is universal. The wheels go upon their four sides—that is, to all points of the compass. God's providence is everywhere. It pervades the universe; it touches the most distant orb and the minutest atom. It has been well illustrated by a well-organized postal service. Letters are put in the post-office, and all seems confusion. But there is a direction on the envelope which enables the officer to classify all, and to send each upon its appointed mis-

sion. They are borne to the four quarters of the globe. Each goes upon its silent mission. Many of them come to your city. They are carefully placed in the hands of the postman. By him they are conveyed along every street. One is conveyed to a palace, another to a hovel. One brings sorrow, another joy. The delivery of one is followed by tears, and another by smiles. The good government has done all in love, and sees that none shall be neglected. So it is with Divine Providence. He sends his messages east and west, north and south. He does all in love. To one is borne a message of grief, to another a message of joy. One tells of a happy marriage or a joyous birth, and another of a sad death. But they go, and all are sent in love.

6. Providence moves forward, straightforward, to the accomplishment of its great purposes. It turns not. The wheels are never locked. They never turn aside. To our poor mortal vision they may seem to turn aside from the one great aim, and sometimes they may seem to stop as though they were locked and could not move another inch. But on they go. Look at Joseph. He was to be placed in power in Egypt, and his brethren were to bow to him; he was placed in a pit to die, but Providence delivered him; he was sold into slavery, and his brothers were triumphant. The wheels seem to stop. He is made ruler in Potiphar's house. Here is an advance. But again the wheels seem to lock when he is thrown into prison through the cruelty of his mistress. The wheels were not locked. The chariot of God was moving forward. Wheels within wheels carried Joseph until the dream was fulfilled, and his brothers

brought the aged Jacob, and together they all bowed at the feet of him who had been mourned as dead, and who had really been thrown into a pit and then into a prison, from all of which he was brought out in safety and in triumph by the wheels of Providence.

7. Then the rings of the wheel were so high that they were dreadful. Providence often fills with dismay. It often terrifies, and a fearful panic seizes upon whole communities. It is often thus that people are stunned by the fearful displays of Divine power. They astonish, they alarm. They are so high that they are dreadful. I have seen frightened families running from a plague. They had lost their wits. They knew not what they were doing. As God moved forward the great revolving wheels of his providence people hurried from the sight, and seemed desirous of hiding themselves from the presence of the "great and terrible God."

8. Providence is wise. Their rings were full of eyes. The eye, as the organ of vision, is often used to illustrate knowledge or wisdom. They are so employed in this wonderful vision. God is wise. His knowledge embraces all things: the good and the great, the simple and the complex. He knows not as we know, but without effort and infallible certainty. The darkness is as the light. He knows the end from the beginning. Hence, he can turn the event to good. When man fell and brought death and all our woes, and all was lost, God, in his providence, brought good out of evil. God did not make man to sin, but he offered a remedy so that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. In redemption God revealed himself to men and angels in the clearest light and

in boundless love. As the God-man hung in agony on Calvary, he gave the sublimest expression of Divinity that the great past of eternity had ever heard. As man was redeemed, and God could be just and the justifier of the ungodly, God was brought so near to man that the throbbings of his great heart could be felt. Our God is not impassive. He is tender as a mother, and embodies in his own great nature the warmest, purest, holiest love, which expresses itself in giving his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might be saved. So God can and will bring good out of evil. He forbids evil; he hates sin. It would be better for man not to sin. It is a fearful, direful curse. Yet such is the wisdom of God that he can make the wrath of man to praise him, and can restrain the remainder of wrath.

9. The providence of God is connected with the ministry of angels. These are represented as accompanying all the movements of the revolving wheels. My brethren, angels are about us. They fan us with their wings, they hush us to our slumbers, they minister to our griefs, they watch along our pathway, they hover over our dying couch, they accompany us to our home in heaven; they ministered to Abraham, and guarded Lot; they were moving the chariots of God against the foes of the defenseless Hebrews; they accompanied Jacob in his wanderings; they were with Daniel in the den of lions, and with the three Hebrews in the furnace of fire; they were near by when Jesus of Nazareth was born, and made the air melodious with songs of praise; they flew to his side in the desert, and ministered to his exhausted body and his sinking spirit; they are in God's providence as the

ministers to do his will. Holy angels, blessed sons of God, shout for joy whenever a sinner yields and a soul is saved.

10. Then the Spirit is also in Providence. The Spirit of life is in the wheels. So a better translation expresses the meaning. The Holy Ghost in Providence. He moves with all the intervolving, complicated wheels. Whenever these wheels move they are not only accompanied by angels, but the Spirit of life is in the wheels. I beg you, dear friends, regard this picture of Divine providence with profoundest reverence and deepest awe. God will not save you without your own consent. Consent now to be his. He calls you; angels invite you; the Holy Spirit warns you. I pray you, in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.

R.

XXI.

OUT OF THE DEN.

"So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God."—
(Daniel vi. 23.)

A TRAGIC trial of faith. This its result. That he should be cast into the den was the decree of Darius; that he should come out of it was the decree of the living God. Daniel was grand as he went down, but grander as he came up from the den. Every hero of God is grandest as he comes up from the depths wherein he has tested God's power to deliver.

1. *He made no time or terms with God.* He didn't say, "I will trust till midnight or three o'clock in the morning, and if not delivered will despair." He didn't say, "If I am not hurt by the fall when thrown in, and the lions are not fearfully fierce, and do not roar very loudly, I will still trust God." He simply trusted God, hurt or no hurt, roar or no roar.

And we may suppose the demonstrations were dreadful. It is not said that the angel subdued the nature of the lions, but simply "shut their mouths." They retained and displayed their lionish nature, but were rendered unable to hurt the prophet. When Daniel's persecutors were thrown into the den the lions "broke their bones ere they reached the bottom."

What more frightful than a collection of beasts at

the feeding hour? The sight and scent of the bloody meat render them frantic. Growling, leaping, plunging, they catch the raw and gory food as it is thrown against their iron cage, devouring it amid the noise of crunching bones and subdued growls of gratified ferocity.

Think of an unarmed and defenseless man cast into a den of such blood-thirsty beasts. But Daniel went into that den by faith; and faith sees no difference in a den and a palace, and hears the lion's growl as the kitten's cry.

Here is where we miss it. We make time and terms with God. We rest our case too often on the density of the darkness or the ferocity of the lions. There are dens in every life-journey, and we cannot evade them. Go through them we must. No man reaches heaven but through the dens. Sometimes we say, "We will trust until certain things are tried, and until a certain time or a certain opportunity has passed; and if not delivered, then we will give up in despair."

Had Daniel set a time-piece for the Lord to work by, and set the hour at midnight, or two or three in the morning, then he had perished in the den. True faith has no time-piece, no fixed hour, never looks at the clock, but trusts and rests in God.

We get into the den and we hear the ominous growl of the old destroyer, disease. We say "we are trusting God," but we want a certain physician, and we call him in haste and we hope until his skill is exhausted, and then we give up the struggle. We get into the dismal old den of debt where so many bones are bleaching; and we hear the roar of the old beast of bankruptcy, and we begin to look around for

a way of escape—some turn whereby we may evade him and keep out of his jaws. We say, “We will trust God until we have tried a certain scheme—speculation, or appealed to a certain friend—and if there is then no relief, we will surrender.”

Another gets into the pit of penitence, where the “pains of hell get hold upon him,” where all his sins turn to lions and roar and gnash upon him. He says: “I will pray so long, I will talk with a certain minister, I will attend a certain meeting, I will go to the public altar so many times; and if not relieved, then I will give up the conflict.”

All this is but fixing time for the Lord. It is a cowardly listening to the roar of the lions. It is the great mistake that keeps us in the pits. These are the things that cut every rope let down to deliver us. Daniel trusted all night, regardless of time or growls or demonstrations.

2. *His deliverance was complete.* “There was no manner of hurt found upon him.” Here we have his condition clearly stated. Out of the depths, and up from the midst of the beasts, and no manner of hurt upon him. As sound in body, as comfortable in mind, and stronger in faith than when he was cast into the den. It was according to his faith. A perfect faith, a perfect deliverance.

We get out of the dens sometimes, but we come out badly scratched and torn, lacerated after such manner that we are never the same persons afterward. How many have been so damaged by some single misfortune, some great loss, some bitter disappointment that they gave up life and seemed only to drift with time!

But Daniel came out mightier than when he went

in. The soul that bravely trusts in God cannot only be quiet and rest and sleep in the den of grief or loss or misfortune, but, refreshed, it comes forth stronger than before it suffered.

He gave the glory to God. "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lion's mouth that they have not hurt me." He had fixed his faith in God, and now he puts the glory right where his faith was. There is where we generally give the praise. If our faith is in a fellow-man, we glorify the fellow-man. If it be in some means employed, we glorify that means. If it be in self, we glorify self. But he saw the angel and recognized his service; but he gave the glory to God. He did not lodge his gratitude and praise with the messenger, but lifted them to the God who sent that messenger. How often we mistake just here! Raised up from sickness, we praise the physician and the remedy, forgetting that God was in it all. A friend extricates us from debt; we lodge the gratitude with him, and forget the God who moved his heart to do the noble need. A man is drowning, a brave arm comes to his rescue; he forgets the God who sent deliverance, and gives his worship to the human deliverer. Best friends, kindest ministries, even angels from heaven are to be second in our praises because they are second in our deliverance.

God is behind all. No angel had ever gone to that den, but that God sent him. There are angels always about us as we go through life's dens, but they are present by God's ordering. No angel floats near us in time of trouble or danger except as it is sent of God. Let us stand by this open den, and learn from the rescued prophet to say, "God hath sent."

Sent the physician, sent the friend, sent the deliverance, in whatever form it may have come.

3. *Why this deliverance?* "Because he believed in his God."

This is the key to this marvelous history. Not delivered because of what he was. Not because he was a prophet. Not because he had been in high office. Not because he was wise and skilled in the art of interpretation. Not because he was a favorite of heaven, a pet of divine providence. Providence does not keep any pets. He was saved "because he believed in his God."

Lions have little regard for greatness or goodness. They would have devoured Daniel as quickly as they did his executioners, had not God sent His angel to shut their mouths. The evil spirits and unholy influences that combat us in life have about as much regard for our wisdom, skill, and dignity as the lions had for Daniel's gifts and excellence. And we overcome, and escape, and rise above them, like he came up from the den; because we trust in God.

Ask that aged widow, sitting now in feebleness, receiving the tender care of her children, who now rise up to "call her blessed;" ask her how she supported and reared the seven fatherless ones left to her in her widowhood and poverty? She will tell you: "I had faith in God." Ask that sufferer, twenty years bed-fast, with no hour of ease, how she has endured and been cheerful, and even risen in spiritual life? She will tell you: "I have believed in my God." And how frequently has your own faith lifted you out of difficulties and dark places where, without it, you had been overwhelmed!

4. *The sublimity of faith.* How sublime is that act of the soul whereby, when all human help has failed, it lifts itself above the natural and the visible, and moves and rests in the supernatural! Like those birds which are equally at home on the earth or in the air. . When hotly pursued, they spread wings and soar away beyond the pursuer's shots.

Thus the soul, when pressed to the extreme of the visible, may spread its faith-wings and ascend beyond the dangers, and rest in that region where the air is clear and the elements at rest.

The eagle is never so grand when on its perch or walking the earth, but when on its flight, when nearest the sun and supported by an element that is invisible.

The soul is made to walk or fly, but is never so grand with its wings folded. Its royalty does not appear when favorable conditions give solid rest for its feet. But its greatness is manifest when all visible supports drop from under it and with full-spread wings it ascends into the restful realm of the supernatural.

It takes the storms to drive some birds up into the higher atmosphere. They ascend to keep above the storm furies. The life tempests are aimed to drive us up higher, to make us familiar with the loftier realms, to bring us nearer the sun—the great central “Sun” of the universe of immortals.

5. *We are indisposed to fly.* The eaglets must be taught by maternal severities to use their wings. God has to teach us to use ours. We manage to walk, and shuffle, and trot along very well; but we are very slow to take wings. “Like the quail of the field, we

are disposed to run and squat and hide and stick close to the ground, rather than fly." Ready to risk a thicket or covering of grass sooner than rise and risk the invisible. But the grandeur of faith is to rise and risk the God you cannot see. Daniel saw nothing 'twixt him and the jaws of the lions, but God was there. The Hebrew brothers saw nothing between them and the furnace flame, but God was between. There have been times when you could see nothing between you and destruction, but God was intervening. The Invisible, the Unseen, the "Lo I am with you" was twixt you and the destructive elements'

Faith apprehends and endures as "seeing Him who is invisible." It brings the unseen into view, and, rising and resting in him, it triumphs ever more. "Have faith in God," Lift yourself above the thickets, and grass-tufts, and bird-hidings of this low earth. Dwell in the unseen. Rest in the divine atmosphere. Then shall it be said of you, at the last, as of the prophet: "He is taken up from the last pit, with no manner of hurt upon him, because he believed in his God."

M.

XXII. WORLDLY VANITY.

“Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?” (Ecclesiastes i. 2, 3.)

THE great question now asked in reference to any enterprise is, Does it pay? That question was asked in the time of Solomon. It is an important question, and the correct answer solves the problem of human life. The author of the text had had the largest experience and with unequalled opportunities to try all the pursuits and follow all the paths then open to man. In reference to each he asks the question, Does it pay? or, “What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?”

He first gave his heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under the sun. He became wise. He was a scientist, ahead of any scholar of his day. He loved nature, and understood many of her laws. He was, for his time, skilled in the natural sciences, having numbered and classified many plants and flowers, birds and beasts, and having made large investigations in the world of organic matter. He was a poet of no mean talent and a writer of proverbs, numerous, various, and wise. He became a statesman, wise and successful, and established a government that won for him the admiration of surrounding nations. In fact the whole world of human knowledge then ac-

cessible had been accurately and laboriously explored by him. He was a head and shoulders above all the lovers of knowledge in the period in which he lived. He had sore travail—earnest, constant, and excessive labor in his search for wisdom. But he persevered and succeeded. Now he is prepared to answer the question, Does it pay? His answer is: “In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” Yet he said: “Wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.” In its place knowledge is desirable, but not as the supreme good. It does not satisfy. It leaves its possessor with wants unsupplied and with an aching void which expresses itself in one significant word: “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” The royal preacher does not mean to depreciate knowledge, except as the supreme good. It is good in its place. It is as much superior to folly and ignorance as light to darkness, and yet it is an utter failure, as the one great and only object of human pursuit. It may be varied and profound. It may embrace all matter, and may go on and explore all mind. It may count the stars, and take their dimensions and determine their weight. It may descend into the darkest caverns of earth, and bring out to the light their immense possessions of wealth and beauty. It may examine every fossil, and revel amid the brilliant gems which the dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear. It may make discoveries and pencil new islands of light in the vast archipelago of the skies. It may take in the fine arts, and make oratory and poetry, music and painting, contribute of their vast means to the higher culture of the progressive mind;

and then to all this may be added all that history ever recorded, and a knowledge of all the languages in which thought was ever conveyed; and still it will be felt that all the wisdom of this world is utterly incapable of meeting the great capacities of the human soul. So far as constituting the supreme good, all human knowledge is vanity and vexation of spirit. It is changing with each generation. It passeth away. It leaves its possessor standing upon the shores of a limitless ocean, with only a few pebbles gathered, saying: "All is vanity."

Then the royal preacher turned away from the Pierian spring, and said: "I will try mirth; I will seek pleasure. I will moisten these lips with wine. I will be happy in the very madness of folly." So he tried to be happy amid the scenes of licentious enjoyment, which were largely within his grasp. Epicurus never indulged so much, and the reveling hedonist endeavored to sip pleasure from every flower and to make every passion and principle of his being yield to the one great desire for pleasure. The drunken revel, the licentious dance, and the full gratification of every appetite—all these, and more, were made to contribute to earthly enjoyment. He tarried long at the wine; he drank mixed wines; he sought the association of boon companions; he exhausted every cup of pleasure until his own powers of enjoyment were themselves exhausted, and all that earth could give palled upon his taste, and then, with disappointment in his looks and in his heart, he turned from it all with these ever-recurring words: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Then he turned to wealth. He made great works; he builded houses; he planted vine-

yards; he made gardens and orchards; he obtained men-servants and maid-servants; he had possessions of cattle; and gathered silver and gold and the peculiar treasures of kings—and again all was vanity. Riches may pour in by the millions; they may exist in every form; they may embrace every variety of real and personal property, and may consist of investments regarded as permanent; and yet wealth does not, cannot, meet the demands of the immortal soul. Good in their place and capable of being wielded for the progress of civilization and the increase of human happiness, they are of themselves utterly and forever incapable of solving the problem of human life or of satisfying the great aspirations of redeemed humanity. To pursue riches as a chief good is to dwarf the soul and make it hard and callous; it is to make man a miser, with gold for his idol; it is to confine the great, immortal, ever expansive soul to the surface of a coin, and never allow it to pass beyond the circumference. That coin limits his hopes, and is the culmination of his earthly aspirations. Colder than ice and harder than stone, a soul that might have basked in eternal sunshine and rejoiced in constantly increasing activity and progress finds itself lost to all lofty emotions and sweet sympathies amid the heaps of coins gathered by incalculable toil and a horrid perversion of all its powers.

Then the soul, turning away from wisdom and pleasure and wealth—from philosophy and sensuality, from Platonism and Epicurianism—became a stoic hundreds of years before stoicism was known. He said: "There is a time for every thing. Every thing is bound in fate. I will be utterly indifferent.

I will just take things as they come. I will meet, without care, without anxiety, and without any effort to promote or avert, all the changes of fortune, as there is a time for all things, and nothing can possibly effect a change. I will be a stoic. Let come what may, I am on the stream and nothing can change the current." If a man is born to be hanged, he will be hanged, and nothing can change his destiny. A doctrine, hard, cold, and uncomforting and false, called forth another ejaculation: "All is vanity." The rebound from wild scenes of mirth and laughter, from piles of silver and gold, had borne him to fatalism, and he resolved neither to seek one thing nor another, but to drift with the current and be carried to his destiny, as heedless of that destiny as the brutes that perish or the current on whose surface he was borne. But this would not do. This did not satisfy either reason or conscience. This did not pay, and he turned from it with disgust, if not with horror. And surely nothing is more horrible to enlightened reason and a pure conscience than this doctrine of fatalism. It destroys human responsibility, robs God of his highest attributes, and leaves man a mere machine, without power of choice and driven by dire necessity to do and suffer all that is either done or suffered. Looking at the doctrine as he had looked at the various objects to which he had turned for supreme good as altogether unsatisfying, he again utters the words of the text: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Fatalism did not pay. It honored neither God nor man. It was unsatisfactory as a theory and grossly absurd and abominable in practice.

Then he considered the unequal earthly conditions of men—the conditions of the oppressed and oppressor, the former without a comforter, and pouring out tears of sorrow, and the unresisted power of the latter swayed by selfishness and exercised with remorseless cruelty—and praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are alive. He looked to nonentity. He thought it better that no human being had ever lived. Life was a failure. It had no ultimate good. Its voyage must end sooner or later in a wreck. There was no future—no immortality. It was all dark nonentity in the future as in the past.

But this reflection gave no comfort, and he turned from it in dismay, crying: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Turning away from these dark thoughts, he sought earthly fame. A good name was better than precious ointment. Fame, the greatest that had ever been won by man, extending to the ends of the earth, astonishing the rulers of other lands, and bringing them to see his glory, was won by this wonderful man. It came at his bidding; it elevated him far above ordinary mortals; it astonished the vulgar, and excited the wonder of all. But it did not satisfy. It found him unhappy, and it did not take away his grief or mitigate in the least his troubles. Again all was vanity and vexation of spirit. Then he sought power, extensive and commanding. As though by a wand of enchantment it came at his bidding. His monarchy was absolute. His words were almost omnipotent over his people. No enemy dared lift his head in that kingdom against the most popular and powerful of human kings. His scepter not only commanded respect and obedience, but filled the multi-

tudes with reverence and awe. Power failed as greatly to solve the problem of life as had wealth and fame. Now what was he to do? He had successfully tried every human pursuit, and had met with greater success than had ever before crowned the efforts of man. Still the immortal thirst of the soul remained unquenched. Satisfaction, calm, serene, and full, had not been secured. Still, all was vanity and vexation of spirit.

What must he do? He again turned to wisdom. He earnestly searched and sought for it, as for a concealed treasure; and all that he found amounted to this: God made man upright, and he hath sought out many inventions. But it was well with them that feared God. Now he was beginning to learn. After all his vain search he learned that they alone were happy—they alone had solved the mysterious problem of life—who feared the Lord. The righteous and the wise and their works were in the hand of God. Wisdom was better than strength and better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroyeth much good. At the last he resteth upon a character perfect. It was to be like the ointment of the apothecary, perfectly preserved from the taint of dead flies. God was to be remembered from youth to old age. To fear him and keep his commandments was the whole duty of man. Here he rested. Satisfaction, thorough and complete, filled his heart. The judgment might come, but all was well.

Away from the fear of the Lord, and apart from God's holy service, all was vanity and vexation of spirit. I beg that you will look upon this picture. Here is a royal prince born to a kingdom, remarkable

for his high talents, and winning renown in every department of life—in science and philosophy, in the successful administration of affairs of State, in power to solve the most difficult questions, in the beauties of poetry, and in the wisdom of proverbs, excelling almost every man of his time, inheriting the largest wealth, and living in more than royal splendor; in his old age, with faculties ripe, experience diversified, and standing upon the verge of the grave, and in direct view of the last judgment, with honesty transparent, and under a sense of responsibility proportionate to his wide experience and his large opportunities—declaring that the pursuit of merely worldly wisdom, of pleasure, of wealth, of power, of all the honors of this world was not worthy of an immortal being. The pursuit might be successful, but could not satisfy the immortal aspirations of our redeemed humanity. You might win them all and still be miserable, with the eternal thirst still parching the lips and drying the blood. All that can be secured of earth leaves man a wanderer, groping in darkness, and starving for real food. The soul is too high in its birth, too noble in its aspirations, too much like its great Author, whose image it once bore, to be satisfied with any or all the garbage of earth. God alone, in the fullness of his being, can satisfy immortal man.

Filled with his love, embraced in his arms, pressed to his heart, and rejoicing in his approving smiles, the soul has solved life's problem, and is prepared to look with a calm yet eager and aspiring gaze to a future immortal, pure, and happy.

In this view of life there is no need of failure. The crown of eternal happiness, secured by everlasting

love, shall shine with a splendor which time cannot dim, and which will increase through all the eternal years of an unending future.

The great ocean of human life is covered with wrecks. They warn us on every shore of the dangers of the voyage. Let us for a moment mark the destiny of the numerous voyagers across life's ocean. Here goes a ship with flying pennant, and upon a clear, calm sea. Its crew are active and enterprising, and all the passengers are on the alert. It is the ship *Discovery*, and all on board are seeking for knowledge. For a time it sails the great ocean like a thing of life. It floats as gracefully as a bird. With bright sky above and a calm sea beneath, all things promise success. But look! it is carried into fearful dangers. Clouds darken. The storm howls. A whirlpool draws with its insidious current. On it is borne, and round and round it sweeps with ever-increasing rapidity. At last the fearful vortex swallows it, and now nothing is left but a floating wreck. All is lost! "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Here is another ship. It is a thing of perfect beauty. It moves with a perfection of grace. It sparkles in the summer sunshine like a brilliant gem on the ocean. It is the ship of *Pleasure*. On board all is bright. The music is sweeter than the harp of Orpheus ever produced, and the syrens never equaled its charming songs. All is sweet and soft as marriage bells. Mirth prevails. Laughter is loud and boisterous. The goblet sparkles with the richest wines. The dance increases the merriment as it bounds in sympathy with the most voluptuous strains of music. But listen, a voice comes sounding over the waves!

Take care, you are nearing the maelstrom. Louder swells the music, more joyous sounds the laughter. On, on goes the bright ship of Pleasure. Look! now it is in the whirl. See! its masts are broken. Hear! the music is changed to a wail. Signs of distress are hung out. It is too late. No hope now! Dashed against hidden rocks, the beautiful ship goes down a stranded wreck. The great ship Ambition starts out prouder than any of the rest; stronger too, for it is made largely of iron and brass, and its timbers are the strongest oak. It attempts to pass between Scylla and Charybdis—a foaming gulf on one side, a fearful cliff on the other. Dashed against the cliff, it is borne a wreck into the angry gulf, and all is lost. But see! there moves in the greatest grandeur the ship Plutus. Wealth is carried upon both prow and stern, and gold and silver on both its sides. But down it goes like lead into the deep.

The sea is strewn with wrecks. The sturdiest vessels have been swept by the storm. The most hopeful voyagers have had every hope blasted, and life itself sacrificed in pursuit of phantoms, and have gone to join in the one sad, bitter cry: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

But look! another ship moves out from the harbor, and we read, "The Old Ship of Zion." From deck and mast and cabin arise prayers for a safe voyage. A song, soft, sweet, and tender as the music of angel harps, floats over the sea. "There is a fountain filled with blood," and then another swells out from the floating canvas, "Jesus, Lover of my soul," and still another is pealed from organ, accompanied by sweetest voices. "The Old Ship of Zion." It will

not be wrecked. Christ is on board. Angels hover over it. If a storm comes, a voice says: "Peace, be still," and the waves dash no more. She makes the passage in perfect safety, and lands all her crew and every passenger on the shining shore. Who will come aboard to-day, and leave the wretched vessels that are certain of being wrecked? We offer you free passage and a safe voyage to heaven, the home of the pure and faithful.

R.

XXIII.

THE RESURRECTION BODY.

“But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bear grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.” (1 Corinthians xv. 35-38.)

SHALL we arise from the dead? is not the question of this hour. That is a settled question—settled by the logic of St. Paul, by the word of God, by the resurrection of Christ. Nor is it a question as to whether this veritable body shall arise. There is nothing else buried, and hence nothing else to rise. If there be a resurrection, it must be a resurrection of *this body*.

This entire fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians is a chapter upon the body. It relates to the body and to nothing else. Christ redeemed the body as verily as the soul. And this lengthy chapter is given wholly to this subject.

Reason also joins with revelation in testimony. The body is a part of the person. Soul and body set out together on the life-march. They toil together, endure together, suffer together. The body gives expression to each grace and impulse of the soul. The eyes give tears to tell its griefs. The tongue and

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voice give words and songs to express its joys. The feet are ready, at the soul's command, to run on every mission of mercy, and the hands to toil at its bidding. Then, when the mutual work is ended, shall the soul be exalted to eternal honor, while the body is left forever in dishonor and corruption? Not so. God's justice, like his word, declares: "This mortal must put on immortality."

Then the question before us is, *What manner of body shall we have?* "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

It is a matter of moment with us as to what manner, of body we live in here. And it is proper that we preserve and perpetuate, as long as we may, whatever of physical excellence God has given us. Gathering wrinkles and whitening hair are not cause for special rejoicing, save to such as are weary of life, and to whom they are the tokens of coming release. Then, if it be matter of concern for the body wherein we are here to dwell for a brief season, there must, logically, be profound solicitude to know what manner of body we shall have in the eternal state.

Observe, the apostle does not employ the word "*buried*," but "*sown*"—clearly implying no idea of annihilation or an ended existence, but rather (as the term implies) a continued and increased life. Sowing implies natural, confident expectancy of new and multiplied life. Among the Germans the cemetery is called "God's acre." As the husbandman sows the seed in God's soil, and under his rain and sunshine, expectant of a new and beautiful life to that grain, so we lay the body of our loved one down in the same earth and under the eye of the

same God, confident of a new and glorious resurrection life. God gives the wheat grain a resurrection from year to year to feed and sustain our bodies. That is the sole purpose painted upon every golden field and grooved into every tiny grain that falls from the sower's hand. It is to *feed the human body*. Then if he keep these bodies living for seventy years, by seventy annual resurrections, will he, after all, allow the body itself to perish for lack of a resurrection?

1. *What do we mean by "THIS BODY?"* If we say this body shall rise from the dead, infidelity answers: "Impossible, absurd, preposterous! These bodies dissolve, go back to dust, pass in gaseous forms into the air, are transmuted into vegetation and thence into other forms of animal life, devoured by land and sea animals, and thus are changed into a thousand elements from which they can never be regathered." Now if this were the point contended for, we might give the hour to its discussion. But the true substance or body is a something different from the material particles. "It is that which stands underneath the outward corporeal and gives to it its sole reality." Now it is upon this *true substance* and not upon the material particles that the identity rests. There are two parent words from which the two ideas come. Both signify a body, but the word "*sarx*" signifies the coarser, the fleshly particles, while the "*soma*" is the true substance, or that on which identity is based, that which gives the corporeal "its sole reality."

This is a subtle and mysterious fact which lies so close to the unknown that we cannot reason upon it. You will observe that St. Paul doesn't try to reason

upon it. He brings his mighty logic to bear in argument for *the fact* of a resurrection; but when he comes to the "*how*" and "*what manner of body*," he drops his reasoning and simply throws light upon the fact by an analogy. He even calls the man a "fool" who raises the question on the ground of mere reason. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest" is beyond your understanding. So drop your logic and follow the grain just fallen from your own hand, and be silent while it shall teach you the way of God. "*Thou sowest not that body which shall be.*" That is, not the particles which shall be; for they must die, or else there is no future for the grain. But thou sowest the bare grain—no matter whether of "wheat or some other grain"—but God takes charge of it in its buried state, and while the material particles pass away, he preserves its identity and gives it a body; and to "every seed his own body," or its own identity. Every wheat grain that ever fell into the ground and gave up its grosser particles was preserved in identity and came forth in a new life. And though this subtle fact pass the understanding, yet we know it is true; the particles are changed and the identity preserved. Such is the rapid flow of the particles that each period of seven years makes a complete change in the material of the body. Now, if this change of the material made a change in the identity, then a very few years would change the moral relations of men. The murderer would not be responsible for the deed committed ten years ago. The child born to you ten years ago would not be your child now. And the woman you married a few years since would have passed out of marriage relation

with you. This, by the way, would be a happy fact, and great convenience in those sections and cities where divorce is so much in demand. But identity holds while all material changes occur.

The murderer is on trial. His attorney may plead an entire change in the seven years since the deed was committed. He may urge that his client is not the same man. "The hand that gripped the deadly dirk or drew the fatal trigger has perished long since. This is another and a new hand. Not a minute particle there that was in the hand that shed the blood." You can admit all this; and yet you say, "He is the identical person who committed the act." And that identity is tried, convicted, and executed, notwithstanding the entire material change.

Look at that babe in helpless infancy. See it again in the cares of manhood, and again in feeble age. It has a different corporeity in each period, but the same personality. . My own infant body, the tiny form of a few pulpy pounds, that was nestled first upon my mother's bosom, was not the body of my manhood. Nor is my present body the same in which I may perhaps cripple adown the hill in life's late eventime. Now, my point is this: As these bodies may change every whit of the material, and yet remain the same person and identity, so in the grave they can change again without loss of identity. If they have changed already four or five times, they can change again without affecting the identity. And if you urge that "all the material particles of the body must be raised," then I will ask you which body you mean? Whether you mean the body of my babehood, my manhood, or my old age? Ah! it

is neither. It is a something independent of the perishable. It is that something which has constituted my true selfhood, and by which my friends have known me from childhood, and by which they will know me when I have passed the last change in the grave and shall greet them on that final graveless shore.

2. *This principle is universal.* Not that body in *particles*, but in *identity*. We bury the little nut-brown acorn. Then appears the slender, watery sproutlet, then the graceful sapling, then the grand and lordly oak—the same in reality, but not the same in quantum of material. The oak of two tons the same in reality with the acorn of a fraction of an ounce.

We see the dull worm, as it crawls in the dust, feeds upon the lowest matter, weaves itself into a winding-sheet, makes its own coffin, sinks down in the earth, and “waits all the days of its appointed time until its change come.” At the rising hour it comes forth from its broken chrysalis, throws off its grave-clothes, and rises a thing of beauty winged for its higher and happier sphere. We behold it in its new and lovely life as it floats amid the flowers; we recognize in it the repulsive worm we saw feeding in the dust; but how changed! We cannot reason upon it. Reason will not reach it any more than it will the mystery of the resurrection body. But there is the fact. A happy, sunny, soaring creature—just as mysterious as we shall be when we arise from the dust of death.

Come with me to yon lofty cliff, and there in the nest of rude material we see an eagle's eggs. This

is life in its lowest form—nay, not yet life, but the possibility of life. A few weeks pass, and we come again, and lo! the eaglets, downy, unfledged, helpless, uncouth things, but living. Life in a low form, but it is life. It is an advance upon the mere possibility of life which we saw at first. We wait another year, and then revisit the eyrie on the cliff. There are no eggs, no helpless eaglets, nothing save the old nest in ruins. But hark! a shrill cry comes down from the distant upper deep. We look up, and lo! the proud king of the air is soaring toward the sun, at home in his own higher realm. Here is life in possibility, life in incipency, life in full development, but identity preserved all through.

Brethren, we are yet in life's lower stages. We beat heavily and helplessly about in this old earth-nest; but the time of full fledging approaches. The time is near when we will leave the old nest and ascend to the higher, grander, and immeasurable realm wherein the expanding nature shall have room, shall find its throne, and be with its God.

3. "*He giveth it a body as it hath pleased him.*" Giveth what a body? Not the soul. The soul is not in the question. But he giveth to this *risen identity* a body. He giveth it a corporeity. How? "*As it hath pleased him.*" Here we note the past tense—not as it *shall* but as it *hath* pleased him. To get clear views of what is to be, we must go back to the original design; stand at the beginning and look down through the connections of the Creator's work, and we see clearest what is to be; stand at the beginning if you would understand the end.

God had all futurity before him when he made

man. The fall, the atonement, death, and the resurrection body. The fact of sin was no surprise, and the plan of redemption no after-thought with God. He was not so short-sighted as to have to make after-provision for any disaster that might occur in the roll of the ages. God never had to form any new plans or revise any old one. He does not form a plan to-day and change it to-morrow. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Life with us is a series of formations, revisions, changes, and regrets. We fall upon a plan and run it half a life-time before we find it wrong. But the life of God knows no such change. He abides by the first constitution of things. What pleases you to-day may disgust you to-morrow. Not so with God. "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." And what pleases him at first will please him forever.

4. *Identity a changeless principle.* The great law lines of identity running through and through the universe are simply God's first thoughts. They run through bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial; through the glories of the sun and moon and stars; through the flesh of men, of fishes, and of birds. But while there are different kinds of glories, each holds its identity. Identity is God's law, and changeless as God himself.

There has never been the slightest change in this principle, even in the minutest part of nature. He gave to the wheat grain its peculiar oblong, semi-oval and semi-concave form; and through the dust and darkness of six thousand deaths and resurrections, there has been no semblance of change. But the wheat grain that made bread for the pyramid-

builders is the wheat grain of to-day. He gave to the ape his peculiar, unique, but quadrupedal form, and all the scientists of all ages have not been able to develop and elevate him into a man, So he gave to man, at first, that bipedal, upright, and noble form that "pleased him," and there has been no change in it to this day, save where sin has marred and maimed it.

Then, if all things hold their identity, despite the ravages of death and time, and if this be God's plan and a law of his universe, is not the argument strong that the body we are yet to have will be of the same mold as the body we now have?

If there is to be a change in its form there is no precedent for it—nothing in all the economy of God to indicate it. God will have to reverse the universal order of things, or else the resurrection body will be in the likeness of the body we now wear.

5. *Freaks of fancy.* The mere fancy of the human mind is much inclined to make such changes as would destroy identity, and even destroy the original plan. Poets and painters have ever been inclined to make one change in the resurrection body—that is, to put wings to it. They are generally great men for wings. If they paint a portrait of a babe in the glory-land, they will not stop until they have put wings to the dear little thing, and thus make it look just that much unlike itself—just that far monstrous. Think of a mother with a babe in her arms, and that babe fluttering a pair of wings. The painter who puts a pair of wings to a glorified babe has the same right to add a coat of feathers and a pair of claws. And I can conceive nothing more grotesque than a huge man or a corpulent woman with a pair of wings.

The resurrection body of Christ was the true model. We are to "be like him," whether in the body or out of the body. His identity was unchanged. The disciples knew the dear form. No wings; no additions; no transformation; nothing to make him seem unnatural or other than he had been before his death. If this form of ours so pleased God at first, that, looking down through man's history, he gave it to us, so pleased him that his only Son was clothed in it, spent his earthly life in it, even in death preserved it from corruption, raised it from the grave, ascended in it, and now wears it in his eternal exaltation—is not the proof clear that he will make no change in us save that which is made by eliminating the effects of sin?

6. *How is identity preserved without deformity?* This difficult question finds its answer in this line of thought. You ask, "If this veritable body be raised, will it not be raised with all its natural and unhappy infirmities? Will not the deformity be raised a deformity; the cripple be raised a cripple; the feeble old man be raised a feeble old man?" We answer: There will be no deformity, no decrepitude or infirmity in the resurrection state. And why? Because these things rest upon the material particles, and hence they pass away. If infirmities were based upon the true substance or identity, then they would not pass away, but would appear in the resurrection. But you can easily see that they belong to the material particles. For example: You can scar and change the particles, but you can't scar the identity. Let the broken limb of your little child be amputated. It is scarred and changed. What is changed? Only

the material form; the identity is the same. Amputate both limbs, and it is still the same precious little unchanged identity.

Thus in death, while the same personality remains the same, the outward man shall perish. The outer and coarser phenomenon will pass away, carrying with it the scars, deformity, infirmity, and imperfection that belong to it in the natural life.

We go to the grave to get free from these things. We go there to leave the cumbrous elements that burden and oppress. We go to the grave "in weakness," we leave it in power. "We go in dishonor, we leave in glory." We go bent, limping, tottering, crippling our way into the cemetery; but we shall leave it in the beauty of perfection—in the glory of resurrection power; marching to the music of an eternal triumph; shouting, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

7. *Christ's work was typical resurrection work.* He said: "I am the resurrection." Note how they come to him. They come from every compass point, and with every infirmity known to humanity. They come by multitudes—some bowed to the earth, some hobbling on crutches, others blundering in blindness, and others borne upon beds, "and he healed them all." See them returning! Crutches and canes are left unneeded and lying at his feet, while they are "rejoicing, leaping, and praising God." They come with groans, but return with songs.

This is the final resurrection in miniature. The race is now groaning its way down to the death valley. I see the millions on the march—some in blind-

ness, others palsied, and others infirm in divers forms. I see the strong in effort to aid the feeble. The old man is leaning on the arm of the son. Fond parents are tenderly bearing their afflicted and helpless child onward to the sleeping-place of the worn and weary. Ah! I more than see them. I am one of the multitude helping to carry the helpless, laying away the tired ones as they fall on sleep. Almost weekly I commit some new trust to the bosom of your beautiful city of the dead—"dust to dust." But though the multitude "groan and travail in pain," they are moving toward Him who is the resurrection and the life. That is to be the arena of of Christ's grandest triumph. His most stupendous miracle is yet to be performed. His first was at Cana's marriage feast, where he gave the company gladness by his presence and his power. But this last and grandest of miracles will be at his own marriage feast, when he shall receive his bride, his own redeemed and glorified Church. We are but going to the dust for his glory, that he may glorify himself in our resurrection.

The spring-time Sabbath, with its flowers, is the type and prophecy of that coming day. Riding with a friend at the head of a funeral procession, we came into the quiet cemetery. An April shower had just passed over. The fresh drops from heaven were still clinging and quivering, like liquid silver, upon the grass spears and the new-blown flowers. It was a scene of beauty, freshness, and life. Simultaneously we remarked, "*How beautiful!*" I thought, how appropriate the culture of flowers here—to have them grow and bloom along the path where the mighty

Conqueror ere long shall walk in resurrection power! I shall never forget the moment, the scene, the impress. The flowers had a language to me before unheard, as, lifting their heads, they declared, "We are decking the pathway of Him who is coming from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, mighty to save."

I was lifted up in spirit, and for a moment could almost hear the distant roll of the advancing resurrection host.

Brethren, weary, toil-worn marchers in life's dusty way, take courage; you shall be present and share with him in his last and grandest triumph. M.

XXIV.

ZION AWAKE, STRONG, BEAUTIFUL.

"Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem." (Isaiah lii. 1.)

ZION and Jerusalem are here, as in other places in the Bible, put for the Church of God. God by his holy prophet calls upon the Church to do three things—first, to awake; second, to put on its strength; third, to put on its beautiful garments.

The call to awake implies that the Church is asleep. It needs to be aroused. To show the earnestness of the great Head of the Church, the call to awake is repeated—"Awake, awake."

We live in a stirring age. The men of the world are wide-awake. The business man is looking out for the main chance; enterprise was never more active; energy was never more on the alert; the world is stirred; every thing is moving. In this wakeful, stirring age shall Zion, the Church of God, be asleep? In this wakeful age shall a death-like stupor come upon the spiritual Jerusalem? God calls her to awake—first to the dangers around her. The very stir to which we have adverted may be dangerous to Zion. It may put her to sleep, as though she were under the influence of a deadly narcotic. We may allow the activities of a mere worldly character to absorb all our powers—

engage our entire attention. This must not be. The noise and bustle of business must not be allowed to drown the voice of God as he cries, "Awake."

The danger to be dreaded, my brethren, is that we give all to earth and none to heaven.

Then the Church is called to awake to her responsibilities. The responsibility rests upon the Church to enlighten the world by unveiling the shining face of the Sun of righteousness. The Bible is to be sent into all nations, and the gospel is to be preached to all people. Barbarous nations are to be civilized. For this work—this great work—the Church is held responsible. Zion must awake to this great responsibility. She must move in all her ministry and in all her membership, in holy sympathy with the great work of human redemption.

The Church is called to awake to her glorious privileges. She is the child of God; the redeemed of Christ's blood. Her calling is from heaven. Her privileges are little less than those of the angels. She is the bride of the Lamb. Let her rise to this grand conception. Let her enter the land of Beulah and enjoy communion with the Prince of peace. The privilege of every member of the Church is to walk in the light and rejoice in the sunshine the brightest, in hopes the purest, and in associations as exalting as they are supernatural.

Let Zion awake to her duties. Duties cannot be predicated of the mere animal. They belong to the human, the rational, the responsible, the immortal. Such are the members of Christ's Church. Let them be awake to duty. Whatever else be neglected, let duties be discharged. This requires constant vig-

ilance, glowing zeal, a ready will, and a tender conscience.

Then Zion is called to put on her strength. The strength of the Church is all supernatural. It is not found in human learning, in the beauties of poetry, in the arts of oratory, in the discoveries of science, or in the accumulation of great wealth. Zion must put on the strength that comes from God. Let her put on the strength of love—not mere human love, which is a sublime and powerful passion; but let Zion be clothed with love divine. Here is love beyond the love of woman.

A Church full of love is simply irresistible. Not by the weight of great argument, not by that mysterious power which enables statesmen to lead the multitude, not by the magnetism of piles of gold and silver, but by the strength of love pure and divine is Zion to move onward in her conquest of the world. This is a treasure which, though contained in earthen vessels, though found in human hearts, is more precious than all the hoards of wealth ever gathered by the most successful of earth. It is more precious than rubies, and all the things that can be desired are not to be compared with it.

Zion must put on the strength of consistent piety. This gives all the strength found in a character solid as granite, beautiful as polished marble, and more potent than the mighty oak. It was this strength that made martyrs shout in the midst of the flames and stand unmoved amid tortures the most fiendish, cruel, and terrible that ever disgraced humanity or dishonored God. Strength of character, pure, consistent, firm, stands unmoved, though the earth quake

and the heavens fall. It shrinks never from duty, and prefers death to dishonor, and is nerved with the most heroic courage in the presence of danger, dishonor, or death.

Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem! The figure is changed. The Church is to unite in herself all the strength of the highest, broadest, and most consecrated manhood, and all the beauty of the sweetest and purest womanhood. She is to have strength to resist and beauty to attract; strength to subdue and beauty to win; strength to overcome all opposition and beauty to excite wonder, love, and praise. The Church must have beauty without effeminacy, and strength without coarseness.

Put on thy strength, O Zion, that in thy resistless march all opposition may give way, and put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, that fear may be turned to love, submission to voluntary consecration, and broken-hearted penitence to praise and rapture.

Like a beautiful woman, with heaven in her eye, love in her heart, grace in all her steps, sweetness in her spirit, refinement on her tongue, and purity on her lips, in every gesture dignity, and refinement in all her actions, and clad in garments of faultless modesty and perfect fitness, the Church is to win her grandest conquests and conquer her most stubborn foes. A holy Church is a living Church. She is clad in garments more beautiful than mortal hands ever wove or human skill ever devised.

Then all this strength and all this beauty must be imparted by the Holy Ghost. The power of the Holy Ghost is to stir the Church to conquests grander and more sublime than were ever won amid the

din of battle or the conquests of glorious war. Let it never lose this power—it is divine, it is supernatural, it is Pentecostal. God grant to the Church universal, to the pulpit and the pew, to pen and tongue, a power which shall surpass Pentecost, and fill the world with a flame at once inextinguishable and eternal.

R.

XXV. AARON'S ROD.

"And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness ; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." (Numbers xvii. 8.)

THE contest between Elijah and Baal's prophets was upon the question of godhood. That question was settled by fire—an emblem of God, consuming all and leaving nothing, as if he had said: "I am God, and beside me there is none else."

The question here is a question of *priesthood*, and God settles this by a miracle of growth—a principle of development and type of the ever-increasing power and priesthood of Christ.

There are twelve princes, and all candidates for this honor. Each, by God's direction, writes his name upon his staff of office, and the twelve rods are laid up before the ark in the tabernacle, where is the special manifestation of the divine presence, and on the morrow the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. Thus did God settle the claims of the priesthood, nor has it been questioned to this day.

1. *The life in this rod.* Aaron was the type of Christ in his priesthood, and this miraculous life in the rod beautifully sets forth that life that is through the

priesthood of Christ. Christ declares himself to be the "Light of the world," and another testifies that "in him was life, and the life was the light of men." Becoming our high-priest and offering himself, he becomes our life and the light of the world. And that this life is in the priesthood of Christ alone is here set forth in the most marvelous manner. All were princes, all in prominence and power—twelve scepters, some of them more mighty than Levi. The rods are laid up in the same place, and remain there the same length of time; yet, when brought out on the morrow, every man's rod remained the same and unchanged save that of Aaron; while no other had so much as a bud, that of Aaron had buds, blossoms, and ripe fruit.

2. *The Christ-life is not transmitted.* Temperament, disposition, moral principle, and disease are things that may be transmitted from parent to child; but spiritual life is an implantation from the Son of God. These twelve princes were the descendants of Abraham, sons of the same sire; their rods lay in equality before the ark; they were in every way equal, so far as the economy of man is concerned; yet only the Aaronic rod had life.

We may be thoroughbred, so far as our churchly pedigree is concerned; we may be able to say, "I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews," or, with Flavius Josephus: "I am descended from the sacerdotal line, and am of no mean family," and after all we may remain as destitute of life as the eleven royal rods that lay before the ark.

3. *It is not contagious.* Sin and disease have a self-propagating power. We have no need of a branch

of science, with its colleges and its institutions, for the spread of disease. Disease spreads itself. Neither do we have need of a missionary organization to spread sin abroad. Sin and disease disseminate themselves through native impurities. There is so much corruption of all kinds in this world that they have conductors for their rapid dissemination. Human nature is susceptible to sin at a thousand points. Men catch vices from each other just as they do small-pox, and you have to guard the social atmosphere of your little child to keep him from the contagion of vice and impurity, just as you would to keep him from the most deadly disease.

4. *But these same elements are non-conductors of virtue and purity.* Hence men do not catch religion from one another. The intimate association of the eleven dead rods with the living one did not produce the slightest intimation of life—not so much as a bud or the swelling of the bark indicative of a bud. A man may be associated with those who are filled with the life of Christ; nay, he may be in the Church for years, and yet have no spiritual life. The dead rods were as close to the mercy-seat as the living one, had as high a position in the house of God, but this did not give them life. No man will ever imbibe religion by virtue of his relation to those who are in Christ. There are children who have grown up under the care of godly parents, and men who have spent life with godly wives, and yet will come to the judgment of God as destitute of spiritual life as the rods that lay all night before the ark.

5. *The dead did not prevent the living.* Personate the rod of Aaron, and there was little encourage-

ment for it. It might have said: "Here I am in the midst of all this death. There is no life in one of all my associates. The influences are all against me. I cannot live and grow in the midst of this universal death." But it was not dependent on its fellow-rods for life. It grew from within itself—an inward life-force imparted to it; and having this inner life, it lay there and grew, and grew rapidly, and budded and bloomed and fruited in the same night.

After all the apologies and complaints of inconsistency and deadness in the Church, and all the other excuses for not serving God, it is a matter of a divine inner life—a life within ourselves. That living rod might have said: "Ah! if I could only see one of the other rods growing, that would encourage me and I could have heart to try to grow too." But it had a divinely-imparted life, and in response to that inward life it lifts up its forces, shoves the dead rods out of its way, makes room for itself to grow, unfolds its buds, and brings forth its fruit; and its growth was as rapid as though all the others had been growing with equal rapidity. The soul inspired with the Christ-life within is not dependent on things without and upon its surroundings. It will grow though all around be as the dead rods. With that rod it was "life in the midst of death." Thus the soul full of spirit-life may live and bloom and flourish, though the Church be in a dead condition. It will rise per force of that inward life, shove the bodies of death out of its way, and grow on to grand character in Christ.

6. *Church cannot impart life.* I see the miraculous life-forces at work in the growing rod. There it lies

among the dead, and as the sap circulates the leaves appear, the buds open and breathe their fragrance on the dead rods, the leaves unfold and hang over them with all the grace and tenderness of nature, the soft tendrils twine about them, the blooms blush over them, and even the ripe almonds rest down against them. They are so wrapped about by the growth of the living rod that it is even difficult to separate and shake them from it; but when shaken loose they are found as dead as though there had been no life about them, as dead as though they had not felt a living tendril or been under the shadow of a growing leaf.

7. *The Church is Aaron's rod.* It grows up in the midst of a world that is dead in sin. This old world is a moral dead-house. There is nothing in it that is conducive to spiritual life. This is a very earthy earth. The world loves its own. Men complain that the Church lacks power, and they wonder that she doesn't do more. The wonder is that she lives at all in the midst of universal death. There is nothing that can live in the Dead Sea, and yet the Church lives in this Dead Sea which we call the world—a sea in which there is no spiritual life that is not sent directly from heaven and sustained from the same source. The Church lives because the divine life is in it, and the fact that it does live is proof that Christ is in it.

8. *Influence.* The living rod threw its leaves and fragrance over the dead ones. The life-forces are working in the Church. She throws her influence over the ungodly as the odor of flowers. As the fragrance of flowers in the sick-chamber, so is the influence of Christianity in this invalid world. Take it

away, and you take the flowers from the garden, the oases from the desert, the fountain from the wayside, immortality from human sentiment, life from the world. It was beautiful to see one that flourished, even among eleven that were dead. One there may be in the family in whom the divine life dwells. Quietly that grace is budding and blooming and bringing its fruit. She is twining her love-tendrils about all in the home, and entangling them in all the sweet influences that grow out of a pure and beautiful life. Still they remain as dead as the lifeless rods. But in the final day they shall be disentangled; the sanctified love forces will be unwound and unwrapped from about them. Like Moses shaking the dead rods loose from the living one, they shall be shaken loose forever. I have seen some parting scenes that I shall never forget—but save me from the sight of that last separation, when the tenderest relations are to be severed forever!

9. *No natural agent in this work.* Those rods were perhaps cut from the almond-tree, but all the life and life possibilities were gone out of them—not only dead, but long dead; dry, and very dry. No watering and warming processes could have sprung a life principle. They might have watered and waited forever.

Nature and science can do nothing for the soul in its native state of death. Separated from God, as the rod from the parent stock on which it grew, it must be a supernatural work that restores it, and the agent supernatural. The blooming of that rod in the space of a night was no more marvelous than is the conversion of a soul, and there is no regenerating process

to renew the soul, save the touch of God. Many to-day are trying other schemes—paying, working, wishing, doing, giving, any thing but coming to Christ for a new heart and a new life. But there must be an impartation of a new life through Christ. “Ye must be born again”—then will the dead live; then will the heart beat, the life-current flow, the soul expand, the buds appear, the blooms unfold, and the fruit ripen.

10. *It was instantaneous.* The difference between the natural and the supernatural is a difference of time. It is God and law in both cases. The natural is God at work progressively; the supernatural is God at work independently of time. Both are the same to him. That the dead rod should live at all required the divine power; that it should bud and bloom in a single night required nothing more than that.

The dead soul, to live at all, must have the touch of God, and with this it can live as well in an instant as in an age. The publican lived in a moment. The soul of the penitent thief budded and bloomed and brought forth fruit fit for paradise in an hour, and that hour was on the cross. The sinner that hears me this hour, this moment, if he will but give up all and admit the divine life into his soul, may go down justified. How rapid and radical the changes that God can work in men! You see a man to-day who is a scoffer. God touches his heart; to-morrow he is a witness for Christ and trying to get other men saved. How often you see what is hard to believe in the changes wrought in the very worst of men!

11. *Soul-life in its stages.* Here were first the buds, then the blooms, then the fruit in its ripeness. These

were all on the same rod, fresh and unwithered. Here is soul-life in its possibilities. This life is not one of promise only, but of reality. We have part of the life that now is—not all bloom, but some ripe fruit even here. The soul yields its fruit every season in this life. Though like the first-fruit of summer, faulty and defective, yet it is sweet to the taste. I have picked up the first apples that fell from the old apple-tree that stood in the yard of my childhood home, and to my child-taste they were much like the taste of a perfect apple, and I had only to wait a little time and I had the luscious fruit of the midsummer. So there are soul-joys here—a little dwarfed, imperfect, and untimely they may be, but they have the taste of perfect joys; they remind of the joys that will be full. I have rejoiced under some blessings that seemed much like the ripe fruit of heaven itself. We have only to wait a little time, and we have the midsummer fruits. I loved to go into the orchard when the first tints and blushes were upon the fruit, and taste the sweets of the imperfect and yet immature. So I love to live now among the joys, though imperfect. The blessings here tell me of what is before us. They smell of the odor of a heavenly paradise.

12. *The possibilities.* There were buds and ripe almonds too upon the rod that was filled with supernatural life. Such is the soul that is full of the life of God—ripe graces and at the same time budding possibilities. Buds not yet open. We cannot tell what they contain. “Eye hath not seen.” I have a rare rose-bush; have never seen it in bloom. I go and inspect it. The buds are forming; here is one advanced bud; it is a little parted, and I see the deli-

cate tint as it is ready to peep; but still it "doth not yet appear what it shall be." I wait a time and go again. The grand, royal flower is unfolded, and I catch its fragrance as its beauty meets my eye, a beauty that the bud did not even indicate. The beauty we have seen in the loveliest characters in this life were but the buds. We saw them in sweet promise, then they went away—were transplanted to where the climate is eternally friendly to love and beauty; where the air and the elements are suited to perfection and infinite grace. We saw them last in the gloom and mists and icy chill of disease and death. We are "waiting a time with patience," and then shall we go and see the blooms from these buds, as they give out their beauty and fragrance in the paradise of God. These buddings, these bloomings, these soul possibilities are endless.

M.

XXVI.

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews xii. 1, 2.)

THE great Apostle of the Gentiles often alludes to well-known customs in order to illustrate some great spiritual truth. The allusion in this text is to the Isthmian games. At these games the contestants were among the first men of Greece. Legislators, philosophers, orators, and poets were frequently found among the athletes contending earnestly for a fading crown of green olive-leaves, whose intrinsic value was just nothing at all. The preparation for these races was made with the highest regard to all the laws of health and activity. The food was plain and nourishing. The daily exercise was practiced with direct reference to the attainment of the greatest physical strength and the highest possible speed. The lives of contestants for the prize were consequently marked by the strictest temperance, the greatest continence, and the most vigorous efforts to win the prize for which they entered. It will not be necessary in this discussion to enter into a minute detail of all the circumstances connected with these

physical exercises. The allusion to them will only be made when it is necessary in order to the elucidation of some great gospel truth contained in the text. Allow me to call your attention now to the preparation to be made in order to a successful running of the Christian race. This preparation is expressed in the text by the requisition to lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us. It is known that the racers used to carry weights, and just as they entered upon the race they threw aside these weights in order that by the contrast they might attain to greater speed. The apostle evidently has allusion to this custom, We must lay aside every weight. We must hold on to nothing that can by any possibility retard our progress. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches often hang as weights upon those who are running the race for glory. If we allow the cares of the world to hang heavily upon us; if we become exceedingly anxious in reference to the acquisition of wealth; if we become disposed to complain of providence, or to repine because of poverty—then are we poorly prepared to succeed in the Christian race. This heavy weight may be too great a care for wife or husband, for parent or child. It may be the influence of some friend whose company is too agreeable, and whose indulgence in wit or jests, or whose love of wordly conversation is such as to repress high aspirations. Whatever it may be, it must be laid aside and forever. We must separate from companionship with any and all persons who would hinder us from Christian duty. These are weights too heavy to be borne. It may demand decision of char-

acter and firmness of purpose; it may require self-denial of the highest type, but the responsibility must be met and the duty discharged. Then we are to guard against our besetting sins. Every man has his weak point of character. The sin which attacks that weak point is called the besetting sin, or the well circumstanced sin. One man has a violent temper. He is liable to outbursts of rage, at once unbecoming a Christian and injurious to his spiritual welfare. Another is inclined to perpetual peevishness. The outbursts of the former resemble the eruptions of a volcano belching forth volumes of smoke and flame; the continuous exhibitions of the latter resemble the spitting of flames from some little volcano not in eruption, but daily and hourly sending out its little forked tongues of fire as though designed simply to annoy, but not seriously to harm. The former is like the terrible burst of the thunderstorm, which fills all hearts with terror; the latter is the continuous drizzle, which makes the day uncomfortable without producing terror. Another man's weak point is found in a disposition to exaggerate in every statement that he makes. And another's is found in overweening vanity and an inordinate appetite for praise. By a little candid and careful examination we can all learn at what place to watch. Satan will ever be on the alert to storm the fortress, and he will ever attack you at that place where he will be surest to succeed. Guard your weak points. Strengthen yourself at the very points of character in which you most need strength. Be ready to meet any appeals to sloth, to pride or vanity, to envy or hate, to appetite or passion, to habit or inclination,

and thus foil the adversary in every attempt he may make to enter the citadel of the heart.

Such is the preparation for the race. Now to the race itself. First, we must run the race set before us. The track, like that in the Isthmian games, is well marked out. The race is set before us. We must run true. We must turn aside neither to the right hand nor to the left. The racer that left the course was sure to lose. By the very laws that governed the games he could not win. So it is with us. Duty is the only path to be traveled. It is clearly and fully stated in God's holy word. It is so plain that he that runs may read. The wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. It is the path of the just, that shines more and more to the perfect day. It is the way along which prophets and martyrs and the saints of all ages have run. It is the course of cross-bearing, of self-denial, of prayer, of truth, of faith, of love supreme to God and universal to man. In order to succeed in this race we must be like the athlete to whom the apostle refers. We must start well, run true, and continue on to the end. Hence it is said that we must run with patience the race that is set before us. Impatience renders deliberate action impossible. It is the opposite of calm, consistent firmness. It is often reckless and always incautious. It is spasmodic and violent. It is the foe of happiness and the enemy of peace. It murmurs and repines. It charges God foolishly. It is fretful and discontented. The impatient racer expects the prize before the race is run. He hesitates. He despairs. He sets out with a dash and a gush, and gives up in disgust. So we

must run with patience. Be calm. Be firm. Move on with constantly accelerating speed. Be not depressed by fatigue, or overcome by obstacles. Do not say: "O the race is so long, the difficulties so numerous that I cannot run any longer in this race." Be still, and know that I am God, saith the Holy One.

Looking unto Jesus. Fix your eye and keep it fixed on Jesus. Look to him as your Prophet. He will teach you all things that you need to be taught. He will teach all of duty, all of God, all of eternity that may be needful to know. Look to no other teacher. Look not to science, not to philosophy, not to antiquity, not to human learning. Look to Christ. Look to him as your Priest atoning for your sins, and redeeming your soul and body from sin and death. Look to him as your Sovereign, and as you look cry: "Tear every idol from thy throne, and reign, my Saviour, reign alone." Look to him because he ran this race and gained the prize. Look to him as standing with the crown and offering it to all that will run with patience the race that is set before them. Turn not to the world, look not to man, look not to self, but look away to Jesus, the author of your faith. He is a victor. He endured the cross and despised the shame. He is now at the right hand of God. Look to him as an example of patience, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

The incentives to this race are twofold: First, we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses. These witnesses had been enumerated in the former chapter. They are the witnesses of the truth of our holy religion. They have witnessed it by their words and acts, and sealed their testimony with their blood.

As witnesses of a truth which has stood the opposition of infidels, the inconsistency of hypocrites, the scorn and hatred of men, and the malignity of devils, they encourage us to run on in this race. Under all circumstances and amid all forms of opposition they bore their testimony for Christ and his holy cause. If duty led them to a cross or to the flames, they went without fear, and gladly with their dying breath testified to the truth and power of our holy religion. But the apostle presents them to us as witnesses surrounding us and looking with eager interest to the race that we are running. As at the arena, from lofty seats rising tier above tier, the friends of the contestants were gathered in the Grecian games and encouraged them by their looks and by their words, so now from the lofty battlements of heaven these witnesses are looking down upon us. There they stood in the days of the apostles, and there they will stand forever. Their race is run, their prize is gained, and now they look upon generation after generation as they come upon the arena and enter the race for glory. They never tire of this sight. They never veil their faces nor close their eyes, unless some one has failed in his course and lost the prize of eternal life. Their eyes never grow dim, their interest never flags. They are the sons of God. They are the great heroes of the past, of whom the world was not worthy. They bask in eternal sunlight. They exult in every victory achieved by the Christian soldier, in every prize won by the Christian racer. They are looking upon us, my brethren.

Let us feel their presence. Let us rise to the height of this truth that the noblest and the best

are our witnesses. They strike their harps. They wave their palms. They bend over and call upon us to run well in this race. Take them in which light we may, whether as witnesses to eternal truth or as witnesses to our every step in the race, they should stimulate us to the greatest activity and the most persevering patience. Recently the people of the North and East were deeply excited over the regatta and the contest of skill and energy between the representatives of the different colleges in the great boat-race. They lined the shore. They gathered on slopes and crags. They sought favorable positions to see. They encouraged the young and stalwart sailors in this contest for supremacy. Who can doubt that the presence of these witnesses added much to the efforts of these young men who felt that to them in some sense was committed the glory of the institutions they represented. As they would make a skillful stroke and exhibit tact and perseverance, muscle and energy, the very welkin was made to ring with the shouts of the witnesses that hung like a cloud upon the beach. Then, as the contest grew warmer and the goal was approached, louder than the waves rose shouts of rejoicing friends. So, my brethren, do the witnesses of our race look and beckon, and wave their palms and raise their shouts of encouragement. Life is a voyage, and we are in a great boat-race for the other shore. Angels and men, heroes and saints are looking on. Ply all the energy that God has given you, and pray for the gale. Blow, O winds of heaven, and waft you on to everlasting life! Life is a battle. The hosts of God are in the conflict. Disembodied spirits are

looking to the issues. The prize for which we fight is truth and life. Fight for the right. Contend for the truth. Battle for a crown. Resist the foe, and he will flee. Oppose his march, and you will place him beneath your feet. And when the enemy is routed, and victory perches upon our glorious banner, such a shout from all the hosts above as never before startled the world from its repose will break upon the ears of the victors. Life is a race. A cloud of witnesses gathers around us. They know the dangers that beset and the weariness that afflicts. They have run the race and gained the prize. They are our elder brethren. They feel a gush of holy sympathy as they see us in the race. By smiles and tears, by words and looks, by songs and shouts, they say: "Run on until the goal is reached and the victory is gained." My brethren, let us win. The fathers and mothers that have gone up with a shout send down words of encouragement to us all. Jesus stands and offers a prize which all may win. He won it for us, and we must not forfeit it by lethargy; we must not lose it by inactivity. A living energy must penetrate our minds and move our wills, must quicken our faith and enliven our prayers, must put to flight our fears and rally the hosts of Israel. Finally, we are to be encouraged by the joy before us, just as Jesus was. In this race we may win, and surely this great truth will encourage us in the work before us. Let us look for a moment at the fearful issues of this race. To lose it is to forfeit heaven. It is to lose a crown and a kingdom; it is to forfeit all that is embraced in eternal life. The loss of the soul is involved in losing this race. We forfeit all

the beatitudes which Jesus pronounced in his Sermon on the Mount. We forfeit the joys which Paul beheld when he was carried to the third heaven. We forfeit all the beatific visions which shone out in ineffable brightness upon the view of the beloved disciple in the lonely Isle of Patmos. Let not these rewards of the righteous be lost. Let not those gifts which are exceeding above all that we can ask or think be reserved for us in vain. Let not the rich and abundant flow of redeeming love be poured out in vain for us. It is a solemn duty to run this race. Crowns of incalculable cost are held out to us and are offered as the rewards of a faithful race. The racers among the Greeks exerted every nerve and put forth every possible effort to reach and wear a crown that faded in a few days. Shall we consider it irksome to strive for a crown that shall never lose its luster, whose splendor shall continue undiminished through the roll of eternal years? Reason, self-interest, expediency, duty, conscience, all—all call upon us to so run as to obtain, to so strive that we enter and take the prize. And what a prize it will be! Culture the purest and best, and joys the sweetest and most permanent, honors the highest, and riches the most abundant—*these* be the rewards that shall meet us at the end of the race. Urge on your rapid course. Look to the glittering prize. Lay hold on Eternal Life.

XXVII.

THE GOOD FIGHT.*

“Fight the good fight of faith.” (1 Timothy vi. 12.)

AS this sermon is especially to young soldiers, we shall give it the military feature. Taking the ideas common to military life, and raising them to a higher sphere, we shall endeavor thereby to set forth the loftier heroism of the true soldier of Christ.

And be assured that the life of the soldier is not incompatible with a true Christ-life. The mighty men of war have been the mighty men of God. Beginning with Abraham, and passing down by Joshua and David and Cornelius, even to later heroes, Washington, Polk, Lee, and the immortal Jackson, you will find the mighty martial spirits have been also the heroes of the cross. The fact, therefore, that a man is a soldier is no reason why he may not be a Christian. Let us note the elements in a true soldierhood.

1. *Patriotism is the first element.* This is the basic principle in a true soldier. He must have a love for his country; that is paramount to all things else. He must appreciate his country to that extent that led him to place every thing secondary to its welfare. His patriotism must be such that when all the joys

*A special sermon preached to the members of the Atlanta Rifles, at First Methodist Church, Jan. 23, 1890.

of life and the tender ties of home and family are balanced against his country's call; there is no debate. But an immediate resolute parting with all to respond to her demand.

2. *He must make a self-surrender.* The true soldier makes an entire surrender and sacrifice of himself to his country's cause. He surrenders his liberty and his will for the time. He puts himself into the hands of stern authority, to be used, ordered, commanded, thrust into danger, handled in any way that he can be used for his country's good. The true soldier is automatic. He is an implement. He has no will. He is all merged into the will of his commander.

3. *Obedience implicit.* The man who is self-willed and disinclined to obey authority can never be a true soldier. His obedience must be like that of the servant of Tiberius who, when asked if he had been ordered to burn the capital whether he would have done it, replied, "Tiberius would never have given such an order; but if he had, I should have obeyed, for Tiberius never would have given such an order but for the good of the Roman people."

4. *Power of endurance.* Hardship is a prominent element in a military life. The man who is epicurean or luxurious in his habits must needs renounce these before he volunteers, for military life is distinctive for its hardness. Exposure to all weather, long marches, forced marches, weary nights on the picket's beat, exhaustion from the heat of battle, wearisome confinement from wounds, hard and scant fare, thirst, and sometimes days of starvation—these make up the hardness of a soldier's life.

5. *Courage.* Added to these must be a dauntless

courage. That calm, self-possessed and heroic fearlessness that meets the advancing foe with an unexcited nerve; and bears itself in face of danger as though it knew not what danger meant. These are some of the elements of soldierhood.

6. *Patriotism.* The ideas named, when taken up into the highest ranges of being, give us the teaching of the text. There is a patriotism whereby a man estimates his soul, and the royal franchise vouchsafed unto him through the economy of grace, even as he estimates his country and his citizenship. And the highest type of manhood is that which places the highest estimate upon the highest prerogative. The man who has the exalted rights of citizenship and fails to appreciate them; the man who sells his suffrage or is restrained from using it by mercenary motives; the man unwilling to sacrifice for his own or his country's honor—he is the man who is ranked low in the scale of manhood. He is unworthy the heritage left him by those who freed his country and purchased its liberty and bequeathed it to him.

And no man approximates highest manhood who is destitute of the higher patriotism. If he be living in sin, in neglect and disregard of his moral duty and privilege. If he fail to appreciate and appropriate what Christ has done for him; if his aspiration fail to reach up and out beyond the things that perish, then is it clear that “he is of the earth, earthy?” His earthliness puts him far below the plane of perfect manhood.

7. *Patriotism is supreme love of country.* And the man is a patriot of the higher order when he comes to love God and his own soul supremely. To count

all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Like the hero who leaves home and loved ones, luxury and ease, for the hardships of the camp and the campaign, so the hero of the cross is ready to lay down all to follow Christ, let that all be much or little, whether the fortune of Zaccheus or the fish-nets of Peter. Let a man come to estimate his soul as God estimates it. God accounts it worth the work of redemption, worth all the investment of infinite love, worth the life of his only Son, worth the expenditure of his heart's blood upon the cross. Let me admonish you, young gentlemen, work out, as life's first and greatest problem, the salvation of your soul. You will figure on the worth of your time and your money and your services; but work the soul problem first. Come with me to Calvary's solemn precincts, take hold of that Parthian spear wet with blood, yet warm with innocent life, and with its dripping point, as you stand by the crucified form, work out the problem on the hoary rocks at your feet and tell me the solution. Tell me the worth of your soul. Linger about Golgotha until you get the correct solution. Then base your life-work upon this, and life shall be a grand success.

8. *Self-surrender.* This must be as complete as that of the soldier. There is a homely adage that "a soldier's duty is to eat his rations and obey his orders." This is the sum of a Christian's duty. Take what God sends and do what God orders. There may come, and there will come, places in the life-march you cannot understand. You may wonder why you are marched and countermarched through some bitter places. You are not expected

to know why, but only to march as directed. I remember a hard three days' march in the mud and rain, and on the fourth morning we were ordered to countermarch; and after six days' hard marching we found ourselves a few miles from where we started. But we found out what it meant when we got back, for we met the enemy at that point, and multitudes of our noble fellows ended the life-march there. Some of us will never know why we passed some of life's trials until we get to the life eternal.

9. *Obedience and endurance.* It is no very hard thing to be a soldier if it were all dress parade and no hard marching and fighting. A soldier's life is an easy life in time of peace. The Atlanta Rifles will have a good time while they have the experience of the present—no excitement except an occasional "fair," picnic, or meet at the Cumberland Island. But if the war-cloud should thicken over us, and the order came to march to the front, then you would have a test of your patriotism.

Soldierhood in the highest sense doesn't mean fairs and picnics and pleasures, but constant conflict. It means self-conflict, conflict with evil influences, conflict with sin and Satan. There is hardly a day in the Christian life when there is not skirmishing on some line. The hard and decisive battles may not be many, but the skirmishes will be endless. I saw one year of service, and while the great battles of that year might almost be counted upon the fingers, yet the skirmishing was a daily thing. So, young gentlemen, you will find in life's campaign a few tremendous conflicts. There will be an occasional point where the enemy will seem to have massed his forces,

and then you will have a trial and test of your powers that will mark an epoch in your life and will never be forgotten. But the "Bull Runs" and "Gettysburgs" and "Fort Donelsons" will be few, while there will be daily picket-firing and fighting on a smaller scale. The devil's scouts will be on your life-track, and his sharpshooting will surprise you from ambush; there will be harassing from unexpected directions, insomuch that you will be no day without danger.

10. *Courage.* Moral courage is an element as needful in life as physical courage in a campaign. Whatever may be the soldier's qualifications, without this he is a failure. Homer gives us an inimitable picture of the lack of courage in the person of Paris. He had every other qualification in their highest development.

Now, host to host, in Illium's van
The godlike Paris shone; a leopard's skin
Adorned his shoulder that sustained besides
His falchion and his bow; two spears he shook
With glittering points, and challenged to contend
In arms with the boldest of the Greeks.
Him soon as warlike Menelaus saw
Striding before his host, such joy he felt
As feels the lion lighting in his range
On some huge carcass, antlered stag or goat
By famine urged, nor hounds nor hunter's aught
He fear, but rends it in the sight of all,
So Menelaus in his soul rejoiced
At sight of Paris; vengeance in his heart
And in his hopes, all armed at once he left
His chariot with a leap, and trod the plain.
Heart struck by conscience, Paris, at the sight
Of Menelaus, shrank into his host,
There seeking refuge from the fate he feared,

As one descrying in the woodland heights
A dreadful serpent, at the sight recoils,
His limbs quake under him, his ruddy cheeks
Turn deadly pale, he flies, he disappears,
So godlike Paris, at the dreaded sight
Of Menelaus, plunged into his ranks,
And vanished, lost amid the crowds of Troy.

Paris had the might, the strength, the drill, the build, the bearing; every thing save the dauntless courage. But lacking this all else was useless.

Thus in the battle of life you may have all that nature and culture and art can give, and yet without moral courage you will meet your enemies as Paris met his, only to retreat in shame.

When the enemy comes in the form of a friend and proposes a social drink; or, when hard pressed and on meager wages, the enemy suggests a quick relief by gambling chances, or by a petty, false entry; or when that enemy comes in the winsome form and words of her whose steps take hold on hell—at such hours you will need more than the exterior of a Paris. You will need the heart of a Hector, the dauntless courage of Achilles, or else you fall.

11. *Your ally.* Your safest ally is the living God. At such hours of supreme peril you are safest when you are conscious of an unseen power with you: that presence which was with Joseph in the tragic juncture when his destiny hung upon a moment; that presence that was with Daniel when, dogged by the watchers, he kneeled before his open window and worshiped toward Jerusalem. Remember, young gentlemen, that the mighty drafts made by Joseph and Daniel and Joshua and all the heroes of time have not affected the national bank of divine grace. Its assets are as vast

to-day as when Abel drew on it first, and they are all yours.

12. *The noblest conquest.* Plato says that "self-conquest is the grandest victory." You will not find your most formidable enemy to be a foreign one. You will have no seas to sail or continents to cross to meet that foe. But in a moral conflict "a man's foes are those of his own household." The most subtle and dangerous enemies are in our own nature, and the grandest victories are victories over self.

"He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." Men like Alexander have conquered cities, and then fallen self-conquered after all. "He that ruleth his own spirit and keepeth his body under," he is victor in the realm of highest chivalry. The body is the vehicle in which the man lives and moves. It is the animal on which God has mounted the nobler man. And the double duty of God's cavaliers is to rightly rein the body, and wisely rule the spirit. Christianity is not the destruction of any part of nature, but it is the regulation and right rule of every part. The divine law is that the animal shall serve the man. "The body is to be kept under," and the man always mounted. A strong, sound, and robust frame is a blessing. It is to be estimated, cared for, and rightly used, and yet only used for the service of the nobler man—not to be kept, as I have seen a Kentuckian keep his blooded horse, as a sort of equine idol, to be pampered and groomed and worshiped as worthy of all thought and devotion. There are men out of whom if the horse-thought and horse-devotion were taken would be mere hulls with no substance left. There are

those whose aims and aspirations are confined to the material. What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? Their thought is body-thought, earth-thought, money-thought, thought of earthly ease.

13. *The soul's right and realm.* Though indebted to his majesty, king of England, and recognizing that debt, yet our forefathers recognized also that God had ordained them a better heritage than service to the English crown. Hence they entered the struggle for that better heritage, and through the struggle came up into the broader realm of republican freedom. The soul should recognize its obligations to the body, yet claim a heritage better than mere vassalage to that body. It should throw off the earth yoke and strike for that higher freedom which is its god-designed heritage.

The soul of man is made to walk the skies,
To crop the roses of immortal youth,
To drink the fountain-head of sacred truth ;
To strike the string and lift its voice to heaven's eternal King.
To spend eternity in grateful lays,
And fill heaven's wide circumference with praise.

While the body looks down and searches the ground for its delights the soul, like the astronomer, culls treasures among the stars. Like the caged bird that yet remembers its fellows in the forest of green leaves, and in summer days hears snatches of song from far-off fields, and yearns with all its little life for that liberty which it has never found, and for those songs it would have sung but for its captivity.

"An eagle was taken from the nest upon a mountain ledge, brought home and reared amid the do-

mestic fowls. As he grew, he grew apart from them, and sat moody in silent dignity. When on a summer's day the wild screaming of the hawk sent every fowl in the yard flying and cowering to shelter, he, with flashing eye and discordant scream, reared himself and tried to fly, but alas! he could not, his wings were clipped. He fell sick; would have died if he could. They let him alone. Like Samson's locks, his pinions grew again. They forgot him. He did not forget. His nature told him the sky was his. And one neglectful summer day, when all were dozing, from afar off in the sky, so far that none could see, or see only a floating speck, thence came down a cry so faint that no ear might hear—none but an eagle's. Then, with sudden force, all his life beating in his breast, he sprung up. Away from the yard, the fowls, his owners, over the rick and over the barn, over the trees and over the hills, round and round in growing circles, beaten with growing power of wing, the freed eagle sought his fellow and found his liberty right under the sun."

So to the soul, captive in sin, amid material, earthly things, like the eagle amid the barn-yard fowls, there come elevated moments, faint, sweet voices from above, upward impulses, that make you to forget your surroundings. These are the divine notes calling to higher freedom. These are the vows when the soul responding with all its powers may rise and be free. This is freedom I would have you claim.

14. *It is a fight of faith.* Faith is the power to accept and act upon unseen truth as though it were seen. It is the "evidence of things not seen." It accepts not the things true to the eye, ear, or hand,

but true to the thoughts, the feeling, the imagination, the brighter nature. This faith, after all, is the backbone and mainspring of practical life. The man who believes nothing will do nothing. The farmer sees no bud, hears no bird-note, nor least indication of a growing time. But he believes in the working of nature's laws, and hence he prepares and plows as though he saw the spring-time. So with the trading ships that cross the deep. So with the toilers of earth that go to and from their daily tasks.

Thus you are to fight the life-battle not with carnal weapons, not with eye and arm and hand; but with the higher members. The thought, feelings, imagination, affection. You are to lay hold on things true to them, the things which they demand. You are to fight against and overcome the sensuous and sensual things that debase and enslave them. And sometimes when the battle is sore, and you feel fear of defeat, remember the "Black Prince" at the battle of Cressy. He was a young man of eighteen, fit for a member of your ranks, but he led the van in that battle. His father drew up a strong force on a hill in full view, and stood ready to send relief should his son need it. The young prince, being sharply charged and in some danger, sent to his father for succor; and, as the king delayed, another message was sent to crave immediate assistance. The king replied: "Go tell my son that I am not so inexperienced a commander as not to know when aid is needed, nor so careless a father as not to send it." He intended his son to have the honor of the day. Sublime picture! The king on the hill, in the midst of his strong reserves, watching the prince in the

battle. The King of kings sits in his omnipotence, in the midst of his invisible hosts, watching each battling child of his in this earth valley. Ask these old warriors, and they will tell you: "When I was at the point of giving up in a fearful conflict, just then I felt a strange new strength, an unseen presence, as if a being invisible touched and made me strong.

15. *Don't wait to be conscripted.* A conscript may become valiant and do noble service for his country, but he ever has a sense of wounded manhood because compelled into the ranks. Misfortune, disease, bereavement, old age; these are God's conscript officers, ever drafting men into his service who have declined to volunteer. How many wait to be conscripted, wait until compelled into God's service, and thus lose the joy and the honor of giving to the King a voluntary service!

As you have the honor of being volunteers in the ranks of the "Atlanta Rifles," as your unworthy chaplain I adjure you enlist in the higher ranks for a nobler warfare. And may God make you victors in every conflict until the campaign shall close—until your company, war-worn and battle-scarred, yet covered with glory, shall come to the eternal city, and there stack arms under the shade of the walls, and enter in through the gates to be crowned and sceptered conquerors and rulers for eternity.

M.

XXVIII.

CONFLICT OF GREAT PRINCIPLES.

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.” (Revelation xix. 19.)

THE conflict of great principles has been going on since the creation of man. It is a fearful contest, involving the deepest interests of the human race. No human being can sit quietly and say that it is no concern of his. There can be no neutrality among rational beings. Admit it or not, we are in for the fight, and there is no discharge in this war.

Let us then, on this our Conference Sabbath of the year 1886, survey the field, investigate the claims of our leaders, make an examination as to the great principles involved, and determine our own relations to the contending hosts.

On the one side we behold the beast and the kings of the earth, and on the other we see the Faithful and True on the white horse. The beast represents all bad principles. The Faithful and True represents all good principles.

It is no pleasant duty to describe him who in the text is called the beast and who is the representative of total depravity. He is represented by various names in the Bible, all of which indicate the blackness of his character and his utter destitution of every noble principle. He is cunning without wisdom,

plausible without reason, seductive without one real charm, deceitful beyond measure, and cruel without mitigation or the least element of mercy. He is bold, defiant, energetic, and crafty to the last degree. Base in his aims, unholy in all his purposes, depraved in every faculty, he well deserves the name of beast. He is indeed a roaring lion, seeking whom he may destroy. He thirsts for human souls. His eagerness to destroy is equaled only by the utter corruption of a nature from which all purity has been banished. Lost to virtue and to hope, to truth and generosity, he is constantly seeking some new victim, and would, if he could, drag the infinite One from his eternal throne. His effrontery defies all rivalry and distances all human efforts in that direction. With him truth is without attraction, and he deservedly receives the well-applied epithet, "father of lies." A very Proteus, he will assume all shapes and for the time transform himself into an angel of light to accomplish his base designs. He accomplishes the ruin of the unwary, with a satisfaction at once inexplicable and most detestable. He gloats over innocence destroyed, and misery accomplished. The wails of eternal anguish are to him the sweetest, softest strains of music. The blackness of his character has no relief, while the hopelessness of his misery is unmitigated by the increased number of his wretched victims. He is the leader of the hosts of darkness. He seeks to establish error and perpetuate crime. Violence and fraud, poverty and shame, hypocrisy and deception, are the means by which he accomplishes his nefarious and cruel purposes. His followers are like him. They are represented in the text as "kings of the earth." By

this is meant that the men of power and influence—of so much power and influence as to be called kings—are his willing emissaries, his devoted followers.

It is a sad fact in the history of the human race that so many of those who have sought and obtained distinction among men have been fighting under the dark banner of the beast. The Herods and the Pilates, the Neroes and the Domitians, have been enemies of God and the foes of their race. So it has been with many upon whose heads have rested regal crowns. Leaders, too, in literature, in science, in philosophy, and even in religion, have been the followers of the beast, and have arrayed themselves under a banner dark as hell, cruel as death, and as gloomy as the grave.

On the other side the troops are led by Faithful and True on his white horse. The horse represents strength and swiftness, and white represents purity. I beg that you will not merely look, but fix your gaze upon our great Leader. He is faithful and true. Truth is the girdle of his loins. Righteousness is the girdle of his reins. True is not sufficiently strong to express his perfect character. He is truth itself. He embodies it; he exhibits it; he personates it. The portrait of truth is his likeness, and fidelity marks all his actions. He is truth in its essence, in its beauty, and in its power. He is truth unalloyed, unsoiled, immutable, eternal. There is in him no mixture of evil, no defilement of sin, no likeness to injustice or cruelty. He is the Alpha and the Omega in truth, the highest and grandest of which the mind can form the least conception. Then he is purity

without spot. Omnipotence expresses his power, and light or electricity in their inconceivable swiftness give some idea of the rapidity of his movements. His eyes are as a flame of fire. This figure represents his all-piercing knowledge. He knoweth all things. The darkness to him is as the light. His knowledge penetrates to the very depths of outer darkness. It comprehends the great and minute, the distant and the near, the past, present, and future, and nothing can be concealed from him. He has on his head many crowns. He is the king universal. He rules creation. He guides providence. He accomplishes redemption. He is king of men and of angels. His right to rule is without a flaw. All worlds should crown him and all voices proclaim him "Lord of all, King of kings, and Lord of lords."

He is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood. This vesture puts him before us in his character as the world's Redeemer. His blood atones for all our race and stains all his raiment. Blood is the sign of cleansing, and its being shed for others is evidence of deepest love. His bloody vesture indicates suffering, love, cleansing, salvation through Jesus Christ. Redeemer of men, the God-man, the world's hope, the grandest expression of love and power, of truth and fidelity, of suffering and patience, of justice and mercy—this alone ought to unite all men on the side of Christ to fight, and to die if need be, for him and his holy cause.

His name is the Word of God. He is the incarnate Word—the divine Logos in human form. Mysterious, indefinable beyond all conception, good, loving, and true, the great Captain-general of our salvation

appeals to every high and noble principle, and thus calls upon all men to enlist for him and under him to do battle for the right. Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he shall smite the nations. The word of God is the sword which the Spirit wields. It is sharp, well-tempered, tried, and true. This sword of the Spirit—this keen Damascus blade—cuts even to the dividing asunder of the sinner and his sins, of the joints and marrow. This two-edged sword is to smite the nations and to bring them as willing subjects to him clothed in a vesture dipped in blood.

Again is his character as Redeemer brought to light. He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. Isaiah describes him as treading the wine-press alone, and of all the people there were none with him. As our Redeemer, he fights the powers of darkness and conquers when he seems to be defeated.

Then his followers in this great battle are clothed in linen, white and clean. Pure and strong, these are the soldiers of Christ. With principles lofty, strong, pure, these soldiers follow the greatest of Captains to the conquest of the world. Their monuments indicate their aggressive character. The Jewish Church was stationary, the Christian Church is progressive. For two thousand years and more the Jewish Church stood as a great light-house, silently offering a refuge within its ample walls to the wanderers in life's wilderness. For nearly that time the Christian Church has moved forward like a conquering army, with banners flying, and offering protection to all that would allow her broad folds to float over

them. To-day the war rages. To-day the battle-flags float around the globe. The great Captain is still upon his white horse, unworn by time, active and strong, and making strides and accomplishing conquests never accomplished before. Would that we could ascend some dizzy height and see these mighty hosts urging on the battle in hoary Asia, on the Dark Continent, in refined Europe, over all the New World, and among the isles of the sea. With eyes as a flame of fire, he surveys the field, and with tongues of flame and the voice of a trumpet he gives his command. His officers and men are well in hand. He has generals and lieutenants all over the continents and islands, and his soldiers are encouraged as never before in the history of the world. Truth is omnipotent; love is mighty; justice unconquerable; purity is immortal; faith is radiant; hope is courageous. These are the great principles which keep the mighty army in motion and which assure of victory.

But our position must be higher than the loftiest elevations upon the earth. Let us in imagination take our position with the angel in the sun. He calls to all living beings, to men and angels, to birds and beasts, and proclaims the great battle of Armageddon fought and won. Long and terrible has been the conflict and glorious has been the victory. It is only from the sun as the earth revolves around it that the witnessing angel could have seen and proclaimed the triumph of truth over falsehood and holiness over sin. The beast is conquered. The King of kings is victorious. As the sun sheds its radiance around the world, look and see. Right and might are on the same side, and a victory which thrills the universe

with joy is proclaimed. I see the last struggle. It is going on now. Infidelity has yielded almost universally to the power of truth. The sword of the Spirit has conquered the nations. The Bible, the blessed Bible, is triumphant. The forces of the enemy are dispirited, battered, bruised, and overcome.

R.

XXIX.

TRUE LIBERTY.

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (John viii. 36.)

PERFECT freedom is essential to complete happiness. The love of it is inherent in man's nature. To be, in the highest sense, is to be free. God made man free; and while he stood as God's freeman, he filled the measure of perfect manhood.

Sin reduced, degraded, enslaved him, and his history since has been the slave's history. The gospel is the proclamation of emancipation. The Son of God, the divine Moses, leading the race up from ruin, and the militant Church, in her march, is the long-lost Israel struggling back and up to original freedom; and the text is the assurance, “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

1. *What is liberty?* Men falsely define it when they make it to mean doing one's own will. There is a great first principle underlying it, and liberty can't exist outside of this principle. Liberty has its basis in morals. It is founded in the *oughtness* of things. The first great principle of right being the foundation, the man must come into *rapport* with the right, insomuch as to have a mind to do what he ought to do. He must bring himself up to this key-note of

ought. And the exercise of this right mind and the doing right—this is liberty. Liberty is the right to do right.

God himself is in this liberty. This is “liberty of God.” He reigns not only in the universe, but he reigns within himself; that is, he holds himself in his essential being and nature to this first principle of right. His eternal and unoriginated freedom rests on this, and true liberty is the living as God lives—doing that which a man ought to do. The key-note of oughtness is the scepter with which God rules. We are “free indeed” when we come up to grasp it and live and rule with him. The man who is living as he ought to live is a co-ruler with God. He is a power leagued with God, making men better and holding the moral forces in balance. A grand trunk rail-line stretches from New York to the Golden Gate. That line ascends mountains, sweeps valleys, spans rivers, threads tunnels, borders canyons, and crosses every manner of territory. But no train—passenger, freight, accommodation, construction, or hand-car—makes that run, except according to the iron track. They must make every rise and fall and curve and turn made by the iron rails beneath; and to leave the track is to wreck. Law is the grand trunk line through this life to the celestial city, and each man may engineer his life-train successfully so long as he holds to the law-track. But to leave this is to wreck. This has wrought the wrecks which make earth sad and hell populous. Men trying to run the life-train independently of the divine law-track—that track whose road-bed is the eternal Rock, whose cross-ties are the promises of God, firm as his

throne, and whose rails are of burnished steel, forged in the white fires of eternal love.

Again, a man can't have liberty but by law. He is free in proportion as he is in harmony and obedience to law. Laws are made *for* men—not to use men, but for men to use—the invisible horses on which men are to override obstacles and ascend to success.

See that cavalier—mounted, firmly seated, rein in hand, steed under control, ready for battle or for flight, prepared to go at will. He is free. But his companion is unhorsed, disarmed, a prisoner—no power to fight or fly; he is captive and a slave. The man struggling against law is the dismounted cavalier. His passions, his earthliness, his sins, have unhorsed him. I see God's cavaliers unhorsed by the devils of mammon, lust, and rum, and their captivity is shameful and their struggles piteous. But the man living in conformity to law, he is the invincible knight of the cross, "riding gloriously forth, conquering and to conquer."

All freedom is on the same basis. A man has physical freedom on this principle. He has no right to eat what he pleases until he first find what is good for him, and then choose to eat what he ought to eat. There is this law of oughtness in his digestion, and he has to do his eating according to that law. He may eat what he pleases, and as much as he pleases, regardless of whether he ought or not, but the oughtness of the question will come up afterward. He will rue his recklessness, and require some medical engineering to get him back on the health-track where he may be free again.

Civil freedom is on the same basis. I am free, as a citizen, to do any thing and every thing I ought to do. There isn't a fetter on my limbs or liberties so long as I keep the civil law-track. But let me get off the track, and knock down one man, and stab another, and smash in a few windows, and I will land up in the jail or the chain-gang, with my liberties reduced, and instead of doing as I please, I will do what the man with the shot-gun and blood-hounds may please for me to do. It was sin, the leaving of the divine law-track, that wrecked our race, and Christ is the great Restorer come to clear up the wreck and place us back in the divine harmony. Hence, "When he shall make us free we shall be free indeed."

2. *Science proposes to free the physical man.* But science can only work on the gospel plan—that is, find out what the law is and persuade men to keep it. Science is doing her part well. She has pitied humanity in its toil and drudgery, and sought to bring relief. She has gone with her best lights into the dark things of nature, sought among her silent forces and strange chemistries, and found out unknown things, and so combined materials and connected them with invisible forces as to secure large relief for the many toilers; and to-day we see steam and electricity and machinery in a thousand forms doing the work that once fell upon the hands of men. They have now but to guide these forces, and, like invisible but untiring slaves, they do the world's drudgery.

Science has also cared for the health of humanity. She has discovered and made known the health laws; ferreted out the subtle, secret magazines of disease

and death—detected them as the “moonshiners” still in the mountain fastness—and made men wise to strike and destroy these foes. All honor to science. She is man’s true friend. “She hath wrought a good work”—“hath done what she could”—but she has not made men even physically free. They still sick-en, suffer, and die. Science can’t free even the lowest department of man’s nature from that bondage into which sin has brought him.

3. *Education proposes mental freedom.* It comes as the angel to the imprisoned apostle, proposing to loose the chains from the mind and lead it out from the dungeon of ignorance, and “open the iron gates” before it, and give it the freedom of which sin has robbed it. And this angel has not been slothful or a failure. Chains have been broken, fetters have fallen, darkness has receded, while ignorance and superstition have fled from before it, as the night-wolves from the dawn of the morning. Education, like Bartholdi’s statue, is lifting its light over the world to-day, and the poor and obscure are called to walk in that light. By this light our nation is ascending. Each succeeding generation wiser than its predecessor. The paths in which our fathers walked seem as threads about the mountain’s base, as we look back from a place half way to the summit. The great man then was the exception and the wonder of the age. The man of great culture and mental power was a demi-god. He shone as a lone star in mid-skies; but the angel of education has led our people up until the masses begin to see the light. The cultured now are not the exception—they begin to be the rule. We hear it said in Church and State:

“Where are the sons of Anak? We have no phenomenal men who stand out and alone as Saul among his brethren.” And why? The reason is, the multitudes are brought up to a plane nearer to where the isolated great once stood. Men can’t overtop humanity now as they did in other and darker days.

But when science and education have done their best—after they have brought untold light and blessing and relief—humanity is not yet free.

There is a soul-bondage, a slavery of the moral and spiritual nature, which these forces cannot reach, and do not claim to reach. We find the princes of science and literature slaves of the vilest passions and most beastly appetites; poets who think and write like gods, and yet are morally unhorsed and living like brutes; Alexanders in the realm of literature, conquering worlds, and yet the slaves of their own appetites and lusts. Note the men in high places in the nation; stars of first magnitude in the national heavens, and how many of them go down in moral darkness—leaders in the world of mind; slaves in the world of morals.

Ah! when science and education and all kindred forces have expended their power, they have but reached the prison-door of the royal captive. There, like Mary at the sepulcher, they must “stand without and weep” and wait until “One comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, mighty to save.” But when he shall come and make you free, you shall be free indeed.

4. *Christ was free.* His life before men was a life of freedom. From birth to burial his life was upon the perfect law-track. He did only what he ought to

do. Oughtness was the scepter of his power. "The things that capture us and bring us into bondage did not touch him. Love of the world, love of praise, the pride of the eye, and the pride of life—nothing moved him save as he ought to move. He was master of this world, while he was servant of men."

There was no opposing element, from the subtlest influence of the devil up to the malignant hatred of men and the turbulent elements of nature, with which he was not in contact, and which he did not conquer and command. He could say, in the profoundest sense: "I have overcome the world."

And we come into perfect freedom by coming into the life of Christ; by having our life united with his, as the branch with the vine, and being dominated by his spirit and his life.

5. *The rights of God's freemen.* Liberate the caged beast, and it returns to its native jungle, and its interests become one with its kind. Open the cage and let the captive bird go free, and its destiny becomes one and common with its tribe.

When Christ frees the prisoner from sin and self, and he comes out into the liberty of God, his being is enlarged and he becomes, like Christ, one with humanity, and hence his rights connect with humanity. A man's rights are regulated by his relations, and related, in this high sense, to humanity, he has no right to do aught that will endanger or hurt humanity at any point. Men talk of liberty to do as they please, write as they please, think as they please, and vote as they please. Such presumption! I say it reverently, God himself has not such right, but he holds himself eternally to the principle of ought-

ness, and claims no right to act save as he ought to act.

There may be, and ofttimes is, such a thing as a legal right to do what is wrong. That is, I may do what is wrong "per se," and the civil statutes may sustain me. There are a thousand things I may do and the civil law will not arrest me, but my oneness with humanity, and hence my obligation to it, will forbid. My conscience will rise up to condemn me, and the pains of my suffering fellow-men will cry up to God if I persist in doing what is hurtful to them, only because I have a civil right to do it. The mighty questions of life and destiny are not legalities—not settled at the court-house, but at the bar of conscience and at the bar of God.

I have a right (legal) to vote for the return of the saloons to our fair city. But I think of the hundreds of children in the public schools, who, while we had the saloons, were never but half supplied, and many of them poorly clad, but who without the saloons have ample books and clothing, with cheery hearts and faces and a chance in life.

I have a right (legal) to vote back the curse, and when my neighbor falls, and his child, almost in infancy, goes with his papers or boot-black's box into the street, I may buy his paper or pay him to polish my boots, as a sort of mollifier to my hurting conscience. No, no! I will keep the curse away, and let my neighbor's child enjoy the comforts of a happy home, as my boy does. I will keep him from the hardness and ruin of the streets, as mine is kept. I will let him have a sober father to love him as I love mine.

Should I cast that vote for rum's return, it would never perish. That vote would live and come up against me in the day of God, the blood within it liquifying and oozing as crimson evidence against me in the judgment hour.

Finally, it is a royal thing to be "free indeed"—to have a conscious superiority over every destructive force; to know there is nothing in the universe can harm you; to feel that sense of omnipotence that commands and controls all forces.

A grand ship is gliding the sea with the grace of the swan and the animation of life. A storm is gathering to swoop fiercely down upon it. The proud vessel leaps forward to meet and give it welcome, as if ready for a sport upon the seas. The waves are lashed and lifted until sea and sky seem merged. That ship ascends and descends as the waters rise and fall, and like the snowy gull, seems at home amid the waves. She rides—the laughing queen of the storm—and when the storm is weary and hushed she pursues her queenly course. That is freedom. Behold that eagle in mid-air. Beyond the storm that rages beneath he is in his native rest. The mad wind-waves but uplift him while he reigns and floats and careers—king of the elements. That is freedom. That is what it is for Christ to make the soul free. It is to be lifted up and leagued with God; made king over the elements that would wreck or destroy; to share with God that omnipotence that rules and rides every tempest, sailing grandly on to the celestial port. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

M.

XXX.

WORSHIP.

“Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” (Psalm xxix. 2.)

THE conscience is not the only faculty addressed in the Scriptures of divine truth. The reason and taste are also addressed. The conscience is appealed to on all questions of truth, and the taste in questions of beauty. The beautiful, the true, and the good are all found in the Bible, and are perfectly suited to the different powers of the human mind. The reason accepts the truth, the conscience impels to the good, and the taste admires the beautiful. If a man's reason is not enlightened, his worship is degraded by ignorance; if his conscience is not purified, his worship will be licentious; and if his taste is not cultivated, his worship is unrefined and forbidding. A striking analogy exists between conscience and the taste. By the conscience we judge and feel in reference to the right. By the taste we judge and feel in reference to the beautiful. If the conscience is cultivated without reference to the taste, we shall do our duty without any reference to the manner of doing it. If the taste is cultivated without reference to conscience, we devote our time to the ideal instead of the real, and to the beautiful in-

stead of the good. We ignore the good and disregard the claims of moral obligations. We admire poetry, painting, and eloquence, but we lose sight of duty. Such a character was Byron. With an imperial imagination and a refined and cultivated taste, he startled the world at once by the brilliancy of his genius and the degradation of his morals. The audacity of his wickedness was almost lost sight of amid the dazzling splendors of his wonderful conceptions. The Bible seeks to create harmony out of the confusion that reigns in man's entire nature. It tells him to get wisdom, and lay fast hold of instruction. It commands him to be good, and requires of him implicit obedience. It urges upon him to be beautiful in his goodness. Thus conscience is called upon to respond to intellect, and taste to accord with conscience. In the text we are called upon to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

We desire, in the discussion of this text, to show first that God addresses man's taste, in order to induce holiness, and to attract us to worship him in its beauty.

It is not merely through the reason and conscience that God addresses man. He appeals to his love of the beautiful. First, nature is full of beauties. Beauty shines in ten thousand brilliant stars that by night throw their splendors over the canopy of heaven. It glows in the mellow radiance of the silvery moon. It imparts its charm to the rising morning, and increases with the opening day. It throws its attractions around the glorious king of day as he moves in majesty from the "chambers of the East," and accompanies him as he appears "like a bride-

groom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit to the ends of it." All along his fiery course beauty gilds his path and shines in all his ways. The blue vault of heaven by day, and the same studded by night with its glittering gems, is beautiful. The globe that we inhabit abounds in objects of beauty. They meet us at every step. They are sprinkled broadcast over the earth. Beauty is found in the valley and on the mountain. In the wild forest and in the cultivated field; in the dense woodland and in the broad prairie; in the placid lake and in the turbulent sea; in the cascade of the mountain and in the spring that gushes up at the base; in cliff and dell and gorge; in brooks and rivulets and rivers; in the vegetables of spring, and in the fruits of autumn; in the gold upon the wing of the butterfly, and in the rich plumage that glows upon the tiny form of the humming-bird; in the hue of the lily and in the blush of the rose; in the modesty of the violet and in the gaudy splendors of the dahlia; in the crawling reptile, in the gentle lamb; in the fleet fawn and in the war-horse, whose "neck is clothed with thunder;" in the rounding of the hill-top, in spreading out the veil; in forming the crystal dew-drops, in painting the flower, and in shaping the blade of grass—the all-Father has displayed the most exquisite taste, as well as the greatest wisdom, goodness, and power. Nature presents the finest models of beauty. These models are found in every crypt and corner; in the dark cavern and in the unfathomable mine; they are seen basking in the sunshine on the surface of the ocean, and are gathered in

almost every form and variety from its vast depths. The vast profusion with which God has supplied objects of beauty, all fitted to win the admiration of man, attests at once his existence and his unity. He that formed man with emotions so sensitive to objects of beauty created the very objects calculated to exercise the emotions. Man is as certainly fitted for the beautiful as he is for air and food, for sunlight and water. And we cannot escape the conviction that the same one God that formed the fish for the sea, the bird for the air, and the reptile for the land, formed man for the beautiful and created the beautiful for man. He invested him with tastes to be gratified by the beautiful, and he filled the universe with beauty to gratify the taste. Such unity of design could only proceed from one infinite intelligence, the Eternal Reason, the absolute God. As when we examine an exquisite work of art the mind at once calls up and admires the skill of the artist, so shall we pass from nature's great galleries of inimitable workmanship to him who made them all.

Second, we hold that God has addressed this same principle of human nature in his holy word. His word is as various as his works. It abounds in beauties such as are found in no other books. The very genius of poetry presided when many of its lofty passages were conceived and recorded. The Bible was a sacred classic before Hesiod wrote or Homer sung. It was the repertory of eloquence a thousand years before Demosthenes startled Greece by his weird and wonderful genius. Its historical records carry us back to the beginning of the race, and throw a radiance over the dim twilight of the past, of which

Herodotus, the great father of history among the Greeks, was totally ignorant. Its elegies are sadder than the strains of Simonides, and its pastorals are sweeter than those of Theocritus and more elegant and refined than even those of Virgil. Its sacred songs sweep over the soul, and attune it to the melody of heaven. They arouse every passion of the heart, and touch every chord of human sympathy. The cries of penitence, the wail of sorrow, the tears of gratitude, the tenderness of love, the shouts of triumph, and the soft breathing of religious devotion, or the higher raptures of inspired fervor, are found ever and anon glowing in beauty along the burning lines which were traced in the misty ages of antiquity by the heaven-guided hands of the Hebrew bards. God could have created the world a vast plain, without variety in its appearance or beauty in its scenery, and so he could have given us his word without one poetic thought, eloquent utterance, or sublime conception, but he chose to impart to both all the attractions which the most vivid imagination could conceive, or most refined and cultivated taste admire.

In the second place, the text teaches us that as God has attracted us by objects of beauty in his works, and by passages of beauty in his word, so we should give to his worship the attractions of beauty. We are to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. In the worship of God there should be nothing repulsive to a refined and cultivated taste. It consists of reading his holy word and expounding the meaning, in adoring prayer and songs of praise. The reading of the word with due solemnity, with clear and distinct articulation, with proper emphasis,

and with full appreciation of its sacred character, is always attractive. As there is no human composition so beautiful, so no reading should be more carefully studied nor more tastefully rendered than the reading of the Holy Scriptures. To read the word of God with careless, rapid, indistinct, and unimpressive utterance is neither respectful to him, nor acceptable to a refined audience. Then the words of thanksgiving, of adoration, of repentance, of consecration, and of intercession, as they are uttered in prayer, should be fitly chosen and most humbly and reverently uttered. The exposition of the truth should be clearly illustrative and commanding. It may have the graces of composition, the beauties of poetry, and the sublimity of the highest oratory; it may arouse imagination and satisfy the taste; but it may not depend upon any of these. The fire of divine oratory must be caught from the skies, and the spirit of the pulpit must be bathed with the Spirit of God. But while the minister, upon whom devolves this part of Divine worship, seeks the inspiration of the Holy Ghost as the great means of his success, he is not allowed to indulge in any cant or vulgarity. He is not to force people to despise him because of his uncouth appearance, his unpolished manners, his vicious style, and his culpable grammar or undignified clownishness. He is to be neither an ignoramus nor a boor. He is not to deal in low epithets, vulgar, abusive, and disgusting anecdotes. Pure thought should be uttered in the purest language. Sound arguments should be delivered in faultless diction, and appeals to the passions should be made in language the most expressive and the

most touching. Let the pulpit, then, have all the charms that innocence and love, purity and wisdom, truth and charity, eloquence and learning, all the power that inspired themes filling an inspired soul can impart to it. Then we must praise the Lord. Sacred songs have always constituted a most attractive part of Divine worship. O come, let us sing unto the Lord. With or without the organ, as may suit the taste, let us sing unto the Lord and make melody in our hearts. Let us praise his holy name. I have no quarrel with the organ. I like it. It is a grand instrument. It is peculiarly adapted to sacred song. It has long been consecrated to the worship of the King in his beauty. It has stood in the temple of God for ages, and has sent out its solemn peals in unison with the chorus of human voices to the praise of his glory. I would not close the organ. It has stood in kingly majesty for centuries, leading in the grandest refrains and in the most majestic diapasons that ever went up from the temple below to the throne on high. Let it stand, my brethren. Let it stand to elevate our conceptions of the symphony of heaven. Let it give out its great notes, its grand swells, its sublime tones, until we shall almost hear the answering peal as it comes from harps and cymbals in heaven. But let us not worship the organ. It is but an instrument—a human instrument. It must serve us and honor God, and add to the beauty of his worship. It must not deprive us of the pleasure of sacred song. It should be a help and not a hinderance to his worship. So should be the choir. Rarely, very rarely, should tunes be sung in which the worshipers cannot all engage. Singing is a part

of Divine worship, and a very important part, and should be so directed as that all who can should unite in it.

In the third place, we are taught that the principal beauty of the worship of God is the beauty of holiness. It is not in the beauty of gorgeous vestments, but in garments made white in the blood of the Lamb. It is not the beauty of a magnificent ritual and of imposing ceremonies, but in the beauty of holiness. It conforms to the image of God, and is therefore beautiful. In holiness there is nothing disgusting, nothing repulsive. It is sin that deforms, holiness beautifies. Sin degrades, holiness elevates. Sin brings death, holiness imparts life. Sin confuses and produces the wildest disorder, holiness regulates and produces perfect harmony. Sin makes the passions wild and fierce, holiness quiets their disorder and subdues them to peace. Holiness is the only patent to true nobility, and is the sign and seal of the heirs of God. If we consider it as simple, it makes the whole character shine with celestial light, and adorns it with unearthly beauty. It is then a seamless, well-fitting robe, as graceful as it is simple—as it is one. If we then regard holiness as complex, it is composed of many virtues each shining with resplendent light. Take all these virtues, and each is a “Gem of purest ray serene.” Nay, more, each is a star of the first magnitude, and together they form a constellation without a rival in the visible heavens, and with no superior shining in the invisible sky of the moral world. Faith, hope, and charity; gentleness, goodness, and truth; purity, meekness, and temperance—these nine virtues, make

up the beauty of holiness, and with these virtues the worship of God must shine. They must illuminate the reading of the word, and they must indite the earnest and devout prayer. They must shed their radiance over the pulpit, and shine like a diadem on the head of the preacher.

R.

XXXI.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” (1 John ii. 15.)

THIS is a sort of wholesale prohibition. It prohibits in the grand total: “Love not the world;” then in the lesser particulars: “Neither the things that are in the world.” When you set aside the world and all the things in the world, that doesn’t leave much in sight to love. Then, as we stand with the space all cleared before us, we may properly ask: “What have we a right to love?” This is the question of the hour.

1. *What is our love?* In introducing the three cardinal virtues the apostle adds this eulogy: “The greatest of these is love.” Not as some say because love will outlive the other two, faith and hope, but rather because love is the embodiment of all the others. There are many fruits of the Spirit, but love embodies them all. Love is the focalizing, the centralizing of all the excellences. Hence love leads and controls the entire man.

I see a grand train running at fine speed. I say there are two, four, six, ten coaches, and a locomotive; but the greatest of these is the locomotive. Love is the locomotive in the soul, and it has all the other powers appended to it, as so many cars,

and it draws or drives them at will. Whichever way the love engine in the man is running, that is the way the other powers will be going.

His thoughts, feelings, impulses, heart, head, hands, all go the way the locomotive goes. Here is the whole train of virtues, but the greatest of these is love, because it controls and carries all the rest. If a man's love is running toward God, then the whole man is going that way; if toward the world, then the entire man is going in that direction.

The love-power being the chief power in the soul, we may understand why God is so careful as to what track that power shall run on. The track on which the love locomotive runs is the track on which the whole train runs.

2. *Why prohibited from loving the world?* The reason is found in the very nature of the world. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away." The prohibition is just as broad as the perishable. The prohibition ends where the perishable ends. He forbids us to love the world because it is not substantial. He would save us from running to ruin. To fix the love on the world is to run the soul, with its train of interests, on the bridge beneath which is only quicksand. The lovers of the world are rushing to drive their powers into shadow, into ruin. What are the millions doing who are in headlong drive after the world? What but driving their trains into the sea, chasing bubbles, building air-castles, going to the rainbow for gold. What but wasting themselves, Pouring their immortality upon the air,

gathering up their God-given powers and flinging them out upon the mists and shadows to vanish and float away?

3. *Where are Napoleon, Cæsar, Frederick the Great, Hannibal, Nero, and a thousand such mighty souls? Where?* Poured out upon an ideal atmosphere we call fame, and blown away by its breath. Where are the souls of many who sleep in the cemetery to-night? Poured out upon houses and lots and merchandise—houses that have been pulled down to give place to others, merchandise long since consumed, lots now held by strangers.

We have no right to expend our heart-force on that which can perish, no right to commit suicide in this way. God has invested too much in us. If we were but animals, then it might be. If only birds, we should build above the earth; but as immortals we have no right to build lower than the skies. It is a prostitution of our Lord's investment. A wasting of his goods for which he will call us to account.

4. *What have we a right to love?* We have a right to love those things and those qualities that are immortal and undying; to love such beings as have those qualities. We have right to love God, angels, men. We have right to use the world, but not to love it. Employ it, appreciate it, but only as a means, not as an end. We are not merely to grow into the world and there stop, but we are to grow through it until the roots of our nature take hold upon immortal things. Stop not until you find depth of earth wherein you may grow forever. That is why we see so many withered and blasted natures. How often you see men and women who seem as if

storm and wind swept, all the true being gone from them—withered in soul! They have stopped in the world, have not reached through, have not been planted in God.

5. *Jesus fixed the limit.* Love God supremely, and my fellow-man as myself. God and my fellow-man. It is not said that we shall love the angels. We are so dissociated from them by our earth-environment that we can know little of their nature. The angels have never become human yet, and God has; so we can get closer to him and know him better than we can the angels. We are not to love devils. They are powerless to appreciate a pure affection. They can neither appreciate nor reciprocate affection. In their consummate wickedness they can only abuse love. They abused the divine, the highest love. So to love devils would be like loving the world, wasting ourselves upon the wind.

6. *But there is no waste in loving God.* Because I am loving those perfections and qualities which are eternal. Judas thought it great waste when Mary poured the oil upon the Master. But Jesus said: "She hath wrought a good work." It was illustrious waste—illustrious because poured out upon undying perfection. Thus when you come with a heart broken, and pour out its wealth at the feet of the Master, the world, Judas-like, may say it is great waste; but it shall be told in eternity. In eternity we shall hear of the love that we pour out upon God day by day. It will not be wasted; God will preserve it. He who has the prayers of his saints preserved in golden vials, will he not preserve our love? This is the treasure we are laying up in heaven. . *We send*

ourselves back there continually by the motive power of love. Tell me how much active self-sacrificing love you have given to God, and I will tell you how much treasure you have in heaven. We measure our estate in the glory land. The love-line that we carry here will tell the dimensions of inheritance in heaven. So loving God is not wasting but saving the true self. The love locomotive is not dashing to destruction over quicksands and broken bridges, but running upon a rock road-bed, running upon the Rock of Ages, and carrying all the soul-powers toward God. Tell me the joys of that soul loving God supremely, running with all the powers under full speed toward glory and toward God.

7. *Loving our fellow men.* In this we are bestowing our love upon qualities which are deathless. Hence our love is not wasted. We bestow it where it may be appreciated and returned. It is also a sort of remedy for the ills of those whom we love. The first impulse toward a better life is often from some kindness received from one who has a measure of the Master's spirit. God knows the best remedy for fallen humanity, and when he undertook for its recovery and its cure his only remedy was love, his only prescription was love. That was God's way to help humanity, and that is our way. If we make men better it will be only through the same sovereign remedy of love. And the cure is sometimes very slow even with this prescription made out by God himself and filled from the apothecaries of heaven. The old mother sometimes has to love and pray a long, long while before she sees any change in the wayward boy. But the blessed old remedy

begins to work after awhile, and the boy has a strange feeling about the heart, and somehow old impressions come back to him, and he thinks of her who has loved him so long and prayed so much, and he begins to want to know that mother's God and that mother's peace; and ere it is long he is saved. Love saved him. Love brought him back. Love healed him—a Saviour's love and a mother's love combined.

8. *Then all may do something.* Since love is the force, all may command it. Any one who can love can make humanity better. You say: "I can't do much. I can't do as I did once. I have been unfortunate and have lost my property. I can't give now as I did then." But have you lost your power to love God and humanity? Then you are as strong for good as you have ever been, perhaps more so. I don't find that men have much moral power until they have suffered. Your losses may have made you more mighty in the moral department of your being. Circumstances may have changed, but so long as you have your power to love God and humanity, just that long you are at no discount for the work of God. Then let us do no more complaining, but go on loving humanity and lifting it up and making it better. Think of it. Complaining and desponding while we are in possession of powers that affect heaven and earth.

9. *It is the basis of the mutual help system.* What a pitiable sort of a helpless half-thing a man is who is alone in the world! Adam had the best chance to be happy by himself that any man ever had; and yet the Lord got sorry for him and said: "It is not good

for man to be alone." And so he mercifully put him to sleep, as if he didn't want him to be conscious of his loneliness until he could make him a companion, somebody to love him. They were to be helps, props to each other, and to this day the love-force lies at the foundation of marriage and hence at the foundation of society and of virtue. And the questions, "Will you love her?" "Will you love him?" "Will you give the strongest power of your being to mutual support in the life-path?" should be answered with the most vigorous assent.

And this power is invincible. When the strong man is in reverses and ready to fail and fall, the wife may prop him with love and he becomes again instinct with life and resolution. When either is weary and faint in the way the other may restore by love. When the heart flutters with disquiet or distress, soothe it with love. Let love come in at the time of trouble, and speak as did the Son of Mary to the sea, "Peace, be still," and there is a sweet calm.

10. *It is joyful work.* I let my love fall upon a man when he is discouraged; that strengthens him and makes me feel better. I don't know any better way to get out of the blues than to go and encourage some despondent, sad soul. The reaction is the best stimulant and tonic that I have ever tried. I go into my garden on a hot summer evening, and the flowers are sick. The fuschias are wilted, and the geraniums look droopy, and the heliotropes hang their heads, and there is a blight on all around. I get the watering pot and begin to atomize them with the cool mist, and soon they begin to cheer up and lift their heads and smile with new life; and I feel a joy in seeing them get over their sickness.

But to see a soul begin to revive under your love treatment, there is a joy that only one can know who has had the experience. As I minister to him his love reacts on me, and thus we help each other. The old Book says something about "building each other up in love." Now that is what it means. It is a grand sight to see a grand piece of architecture rising in magnificent proportions toward heaven, to be an object of admiration for the years to come. But it is grander to see two souls, two immortalities, two breathing eternities, building each other up in love. That is a sort of architecture that shall stand when the ancient mediæval and modern styles have gone back to the dust. May God make us to be master-builders.

11. *How am I to cease loving the world?* You have told me what I shall and shall not love. Now tell me how I am to desist from loving the world. This is the great question of the soul. I love the world. It is natural with me. How am I to change from that which is natural? First, you must become willing to quit loving the world. And that is a question you must settle for yourself. I can't and God will not settle it for you. But when you have made up your mind on that point, and are not only willing but anxious to quit loving the world, then I can easily direct you in the way.

If my love, my thought, my desires, my whole train of powers be running toward the world, how am I to check and change the momentum? How turn this mighty train? The turn-table is at the cross. Its pivots are wet with redeeming blood. The Holy Ghost assists, and there the mightiest natures

are turned from destruction toward God. Get to the cross, and there the moral gravitation will change. The things you now love you will then hate, and the things you now hate you will then love.

Seek first the kingdom of God. Be made a new creature at the cross, and then you will be prepared to enter upon the new life—ready then to love those beings and qualities that are imperishable.

M.

XXXII.

SERMON FOR BUSINESS MEN.

“He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver.”
(Ecclesiastes v. 10.)

MONEY is an absolute necessity of civilization. It is certainly as old as Abraham, who bought land with money then current with the merchant. Without it exchange could not be effected, except by barter. Without it there could be no measure of value. It is to exchange what labor-saving machinery is to agriculture or the mechanic arts. It is not therefore a curse, but a blessing. The inconvenience to which we would be subjected without money would be incalculable and almost intolerable. It has no intrinsic value. It gratifies no natural desire. It does not satisfy the cravings of hunger or thirst, nor can we clothe ourselves with it. Its value is altogether exchange value. Although incompetent of itself to feed or clothe or shelter us, it can purchase that with which we may have all our natural desires satisfied. It is for this reason that it is desired. The demand for it is, consequently, unlimited. As long as there is any thing to be purchased, so long money will be demanded. The direct demand for other articles is limited by our wants. A certain amount of food and clothing is necessary, and when that is fully supplied the demand ceases. So it is with other

things. But this is not the case with money. Money is liable to all the mutations to which other values are subject. When the demand is great, money is high and other values comparatively low. When the supply is great, money is low and other values comparatively high. So that money is just as much under the law of supply and demand as other articles. For many centuries the only universal circulating medium has been gold and silver. Paper is only current and valuable as a representative of gold and silver. It is on many accounts more convenient than the precious metals, and is therefore preferred. It is more portable, more easily counted and identified, and more readily transmitted than coin; and hence has largely taken the place of coin in all mercantile communities. But paper is not money, and would be without value but for its representative character. It is a necessary result of the exchange of commodities between individuals and nations. Hence the term silver in the text is used just as we would now use the word money. And in the discussion of it we shall endeavor to show, first, for what we may innocently desire and use money.

1. It may be desired in order to obtain with it all articles needful to meet our wants. A man needs money that with it he may secure food and raiment; and as it is right for him to be fed and clothed, it is right for him to desire money for such purposes. The desire for money thus to be used is altogether right and proper. Nothing is more natural and nothing more innocent.

2. Money may be sought to build up and increase one's usefulness; money employed to lessen human

misery and to increase human happiness. The very possession of it gives a man position, and enables him to wield a wide and powerful influence. And then he can use it in doing good in a thousand different ways. He can care for the poor and have the ignorant instructed. He can enlighten the savage and clothe the naked. He can become, like Job, eyes to blind and feet to the lame. He can give food to the hungry and medicine to the sick. He can build a home for the orphan, and erect asylums for the blind and deaf, and open a hospital for the aged and infirm. He can cheer the hovel of poverty and make the widow's heart leap for joy. He can print and distribute the word of God in all tongues, and send it to breathe light and hope upon the dreary valley of moral death. He can bless his own children with a liberal education, and can build, equip, and endow colleges for the education of others. He can sustain the gospel at home and send it abroad. For all these objects, and others of a similar character, a man may continually increase in wealth. In all the Old Testament wealth is regarded as a great blessing. It is of itself innocent. There is no sin in being rich. A man may become as rich as Croesus and be a good man. Abraham was rich. Job was rich, and lost all, and God rewarded him with wealth a second time. Boaz was rich, and Ruth was elevated by him to a position of wealth. These examples show that there is no sin in being rich. Our Saviour himself indicates the same truth when he says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you." Wealth is not a crime, and poverty is not a virtue. The former may be a means of use-

fulness and of happiness, and the latter of discipline. Both may be employed for man's good and God's glory. Neither can determine a man's character, nor settle human destiny. The innocence or guilt arises from the manner in which money is used, and from the motive which prompts its acquisition and which governs its use.

3. To waste money is a crime, and frugality is therefore a virtue. The prodigal is a sinner, and must remain unpardoned as long as he is unrepentant. The spendthrift is a sinner who wastes his substance in riotous living, who pursues sinful pleasures and gratifies depraved tastes, who indulges in the revel and in the midnight debauch, who throws his money upon cards and dice; who follows boon companions to saloons and gambling hells, to dance-houses and to abodes where lust and covetousness mingle amid scenes where lewdness sends out a filthy ichor corrupt enough to fill the land with desolation and mourning. To love silver that it may be spent in the gratification of the lower instincts, in the seduction of the young, in the pollution of innocence, in the sacrifice of virtue on the altar of inflamed passions, and in the ruin of once happy homes, is a crime whose altitude no calculation has determined and whose depth no line can fathom. It is worse than throwing money into the sea, or burying it in the earth. It is moral suicide. It is treason to God, whose stewards we are. It is murder most foul, because it destroys character. It is the vilest robbery, because it leaves its victim with virtue gone, innocence banished, and hope blasted, with the past a record of crime and folly and the future a scene of

unmitigated woes for which itself can scarce afford a remedy. Again, it is a great abuse of money to hoard it, to keep it from performing its needed functions, to seek it and secure it for its own sake, to bow down to it as to a god and worship it. The miser, who is just the opposite of the spendthrift, is an idolater of the worst description. His passions are all absorbed in the one great desire for money. His imagination is forever employed in creating visions of wealth. His ideal of earthly grandeur and of celestial glory is silver without canker and gold without wear or waste. Covetousness has eaten up all the moral emotions and stupefied the conscience. It has warped his judgment, limited his reason, and confined his aspirations to money. It has fixed his gaze so intently upon mammon that music has no charms, oratory no power, literature no beauty, domestic love no sweetness, and heaven itself no attractions. "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." (Habakkuk ii. 9-11.) As though the prophet had said the stones and beams and rafters and walls of the house shall utter mysterious voices in denunciation of him who has coveted an evil covetousness. And there is no marvel in this. For covetousness dries up the milk of human kindness, bars the heart to every holy emotion, blights all noble aspirations, dwarfs the intellectual powers, and turns that man to iron. Sympathy is a stranger doomed

to eternal banishment, and gushing tenderness or holy love can find no lodgment in his bosom. It is bad enough to give up all the energies to the getting of money, even when some good is contemplated; bad enough to seek alone for money when it may be used for lawful purposes in the pursuit of trade; but it is worse a thousand-fold to look to money alone for satisfaction.

Money cannot make its possessor happy. To the man suffering the throes of cholera, the pains of neuralgia or rheumatism, the weakness of consumption, of what use is silver? Can it cure gout or dropsy? Can it prevent strokes of paralysis? Can it arrest the progress of fatal diseases? Alas! no. Money does no good to the body scorched with fever. It cannot restore lost health. It cannot give strength to a worn-out constitution. Money cannot stay the onward progress of death. It cannot fill the vacant seat which death has emptied of its once happy occupant. It cannot bring the dead from the grave. It cannot soothe the sorrows that oppress the soul with a burden too great to be borne. It has no such power. Look at that rich man racked with the pains of gout. Why does he groan and writhe as though his limbs were in a vice? Cannot his money cure him? We know that it cannot. Money may foster pride, but it cannot prolong life. It may gratify wants, but it cannot delay grief or diminish the acuteness of pain. It may make men fawn and flatter you, lie and play the sycophant, but it cannot flatter away death nor silence the utterances of a guilty conscience. Do not then set your hearts on filthy lucre: because it cannot satisfy the thirstings

of an immortal nature; because nothing is more deceitful than riches; because nothing can be more fleeting than wealth. It has no stability—no permanency. It takes wings and flies away. As the foundation of happiness, it is worse than yielding sand. As the hope of satisfaction, it is more deceptive than the *ignis fatuus*. Set not your heart upon wealth, unless you would make it hard as stone and dry as an Egyptian mummy. I beseech you try not an experiment which after thousands of years still turns the soul to bitterness and corrodes it with cares that eat like a cancer.

We are an active, vigorous people. We cannot be idle. Many are called to be rich. I pronounce no anathemas upon a man simply because he is rich. I say that wealth involves care, involves peril, and is necessarily unsatisfying. But I do declare that neither in the light of God's word nor of human reason am I able to see any crime in being rich. In reference to it I urge upon you the following principles:

Do not allow the love of wealth to root out the love of God, and never suffer it to become supreme. Do not become so engrossed with the desire for or the care of riches as to be unmindful of other calls. Avoid the very first and the least temptations to covetousness. Be attentive to business. Be conscientious in its discharge. Be punctual. Be merciful. Let your integrity be unquestioned and your word as good as your bond. Never defraud a human being. Never have a dollar upon your conscience. Be liberal. Do the best you can for your own family without making them proud or selfish. Take care of the Church and help the poor. Lay yourself upon the altar, and place

your money with you. Do not borrow without a probability, nay a certainty, of paying. Keep out of any entangling indebtedness. Be enterprising. Urge forward as best you can any and all work which will increase the power and glory of your country. Never condescend to be mean and stingy. In avoiding stinginess do not become a spendthrift. Take Christ with you in your business. Have him always with you. Be rich with his grace and abound in his love. Riches may be deceitful, but he is true. They do not satisfy, but he does. With him your life must be a success as certain as it will be abundant. Shielded by him, you shall be safe amid the cares of poverty or the perils of wealth. He that is faithful in a few things shall be ruler over many things, and shall certainly enter into the joys of his Lord. By the wisdom of his counsels, by the condescension of his poverty, by the voice of his love, by the wants of his Church, I pray you consecrate all that you are and all that you have to him who loved you and gave himself for you. May his providence shield and his Spirit guide you unto death, and then receive you into glory.

R.

XXXIII. THE RIVER.

“O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.” (Isaiah xlviii. 18.)

ONE renowned for his wisdom said of God’s commands: “In keeping of them there is great reward,” and that reward is here put in the majestic language of nature. The river and the sea are used to express the peace and power of a God-fearing people. God speaks to us, then, through these mighty voices to instruct us in the ways of wisdom. “Hearkening to my commandments, thy peace shall be as a river, and thy power as the waves of the sea.”

1. *The position of the river.* There is an expression of the chief grace in its very position. *Humility* is its distinctive feature. It is not aiming for high places, but is content to lie in its lowly channel at the feet of the mountains, and hard by the foot-hills. It seems satisfied to have the privilege of perpetually washing their feet. It is willing to journey all the way along the lowlands and through the valleys. It is never in a fret because it can’t climb to some lofty outlook and exalt itself to position.

And nature is so adjusted that the higher things administer to the river. The pure snows of the mountains, as soon as they soften, come running down to the river. Each little streamlet that frets

its way through the hills comes to add its watery mite to the river's volume. The early and the latter rains bring their alluvial wealth and lay it down upon the right hand and upon the left of the river. The river, as it flows, can look up and say: "The mountains are mine and the hills are mine, the streams (with the wealth of the highlands) are mine—all mine."

2. *Humility is the mark of the man of God.* Willing to become as the little child, "to be little and unknown," to take the lowest place, to sit at the feet of things. The silent gliding of the river is as the work of a man of humility. Where the river is in an uproar and making a great fuss it is bearing no burden. No boat sails there. But where it is bearing the heavy-freighted steamers, there its deep flow is noiseless as the flight of a spirit. So the men who are doing the most good are the least conscious of it, and make least ado about it. Those who carry whole communities by the force of their character and influence do it without ostentation; but the man who happens to have but one poor little virtue is like the hen with one chicken, always clucking, fuming, and parading that little virtue. The man with true humility is like the river at the feet of the mountains, willing to make the whole life-march without promotion. The men in pulpit or pew who are struggling for place and power are men of shallow piety.

3. *But God so adjusts things* as to turn them to the service of the humble. Just as the mountain rills set toward the river, so God's providence turns all things to his good. "Whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are his." Each

season, like the early and the latter rains bringing the rich soil from the mountains to the river-side, brings its treasure into his life-channel. The Nile is richer at its every overflow. Christian character is richer by the trials, pressures, and vicissitudes of each rolling year. All things help him; they make his knowledge broader, his experience richer, his hope brighter, and his life grander each day.

4. *Its increase in volume and power.* This is constant from its beginning. Each tributary adds to its strength. At first a tiny, feeble rill, a pebble will break its flow. It has not power to bear the bark canoe, but each meandering mile will add strength; and the inflow of multiplied streamlets swells it as it flows, until it deepens into the vast and majestic river that bears the burden of mightiest crafts. This is the picture of the life of God in the soul. At first feeble, shallow, weak, how easily discouraged, how timid in meeting obstacles, how often well-nigh overcome! But we have run many a mile since then, over many rough and rocky places I dare say, whirled and eddied, and leaped cataracts, and sometimes seemed well-nigh gone forever; but God has poured in a little stream of grace here and there, and we have gained strength, and now after a thousand meanderings the channel is deeper, the flow quiet, and we now bear the burdens with ease under which we once would have reeled and fallen.

5. *The river most burdened in its deepest parts.* The "Old Eclipse" never went higher than Cincinnati; she drew too much water for a shallow stream. The boats get less toward the river's source. But the mighty vessels, with ponderous freight, are quietly

plying the last deep water that leads out into the sea. This is Christian life. The fact that you have gotten out into the deeper channel, where the experience is richer and more even, is no proof that conflicts are over and that burdens are at an end. The broad experience, like the broad boat, is built for the deep water and heavy cares. You may now have soul-scars and marks of hardness, and yet perhaps your colossal sorrows and giant griefs are still ahead. But what of that, so the grace of God is in proportion? What if the cargo sink the vessel to the water's surface? What if the waves roll higher than the barque, only so we ride them and are not overwhelmed? Be the trials ahead fierce and terrible as they may, they can't sink us deep enough to disturb or destroy that fathomless underflow of peace from God that passeth understanding.

6. *How the elements affect the river.* Their effect is superficial. The winds raise war above it, but it lies down so low between the hills that the commotion is scarcely felt; and when they sweep down with force and fierceness, as they did upon Galilee, they but ruffle the surface for a little, but do not check the flow, or produce so much as a quiver in the quiet glassy depths below; and even when winter waves his icy wand over it, when its very bosom is frozen cold and hard as adamant, this doesn't affect its flow. Beneath its frozen surface are the deep pure waters still flowing on, and the living, happy finny tribes sporting as though it were midsummer. "Peace as a river." The elements about us have only a surface effect upon our peace. The elements are not all favorable; the winds are contrary—often against us;

we have flurries, financial flurries, social flurries, business flurries, domestic flurries, all sorts of flurries; but if we do but keep humble, and lie down low between the hills of sovereign grace, and right at the feet of Jesus, all these soon blow over, and the great deep of the soul's peace is not disturbed.

And when winter comes, and the Church and the heart have their winter-times, when every thing seems to get cold and freeze over, then some folks (born to croak) are ready to say: "The Church is dead—no life left." Is the river dead when frozen over? Are its waters less pure when under the ice? Down deep in the heart of the Church is the flow of peace, the purity of love, the life of faith and firm hope—these are there, living as the fish in winter-time and full of immortality.

7. *Its flow is perpetual.* Unlike the streamlet—swollen with the shower and running wild in the morning, but at noon-time exhausted, flowing in the flood and dried up in the drought—its flow is ceaseless. It flowed past your childhood home. You watched its graceful gliding, angled in its waters, and on its bosom learned to turn the helm and wield the oar. You sported by day along its banks, and fell asleep at night lulled by the murmur of its waters. Changes have come. Other things are changed. Early associates are gone. The old home on the river-side is all changed. You have changed. Gray hairs and furrows are upon your brow, and the romping boy is now the old and time-worn man. But the river is not changed. Go back to early childhood scenes, and the river is still there, flowing smoothly as in other days. Day and night, winter and sum-

mer, it has been flowing. Sleep once more, where strangers now live, at the old home. Wake at the midnight hour, and its murmur still you hear—flowing, ever flowing. “Thy peace shall be as a river.” You remember in early life, when first you felt that peace, when first you felt the inflow of the living water within the soul. It has followed you. Changes have come. Tribulations have been yours. Vicissitudes have been various. You have parted with most you knew then. You have changed. The sobriety of age has taken the place of the fire and fancy of youth; yet, withal, your peace has not changed except to get deeper and wider and richer in its flow. It made your days bright and your nights restful then, and so it sweetens the life-work and gives you songs in the night-time now.

8. *Your righteousness as the waves of the sea.* Here we have the *influence* and *moral power* of the man of God. So the Spirit uses a broader figure. The river has not compass. It is not deep and wide enough. He calls the sea to serve his purpose here—the sea in its most majestic mood, when the winds have lifted up its waves—to express this idea. The sea with uplifted waves is the picture of the moral power of the soul or the Church who keeps his commandments—their power resistless as the waves of the sea. The vessels are the toys and the playthings of the waves. Let them be lifted up, as mountains in combat, and the grandest ship that ever graced the deep is but a thing of their sport. These giants of the sea catch and toss it heavenward, and it seems a dot in the murky heavens. Anon they part and dash it to a depth that may not be fathomed. Could

we lift away the waters and survey old ocean's spacious bed, what noble wrecks would dot the scene—a submarine landscape, with the wrecks resting as dead warriors upon the field! These are the monuments of their resistless power—trophies of the waves.

9. *Such is his moral power* who is in league with God. "There shall no temptation overtake him," etc. That soul shall have power to catch the mightiest temptation and toss it as the waves toss the helpless ship, or dash it as the ship is dashed to deep destruction. Talk of some temptations being "too great for man to withstand;" quote the well-known and well-worn lie of Satan, "Every man has his price;" apologize as you may for the rotten deeds of great magnates of pulpit or pew under great temptations; tell me "the pressure was too great"—and I repel it as a slander on divine grace. As well tell me of a ship too mighty to be tossed by the waves. His grace is sufficient, and if the soul be in league with God, these things are less than the dust of the balance.

10. *Final proof of power.* The sea, in the final day, will bring up the buried proof of its power. What a surrender, when "the sea shall give up its dead," and return the mighty wrecks and trophies of its power! This will be one of the most tragic features of the final scene. Likewise, in that day shall be brought to light the mighty temptations we have overcome. "Hidden things shall be revealed." Like the ship which went down in mid-ocean at midnight, and none were left to tell the tragic tale, the mightiest temptations we have ever met were unseen of all but God, overcome and sunk in the life-depths to be

known only in the day of God. The unchronicled deeds of God's warriors—these things will make up the tragedy of that day, not the rehearsal of the plays well worn and stale, but the unfolding of dreams known only to the actors and to God.

11. *There will then be seen* the glory of the world that Christ refused; the throne of Egypt that Moses refused; Nebuchadnezzar's idols and honors that Daniel refused; the honors of the Church that Paul refused; the wealth, pleasure, the court corruption, that the holy of all ages have refused—these things, with all the infernal inventions for the destruction of souls, with the equipage of the powers of darkness that Christianity has captured. What a scene it will be! I have seen a victorious army in its march, as it piled and burned the captured stores and munitions, but language is too lame to portray this last conflagration—when the prince of darkness finally surrenders, and hell's munitions of war shall light the world for the last grand scene. Brethren, let us hurl and help others to hurl their temptations and their false gods into destruction daily. Add something to the pile of ruins that shall at last attest the conquering power of the Son of God. Ours is a battle, but a grand one. But while we keep his commandments, our peace shall be as a river and our influence and power as the waves of the sea. M.

XXXIV.

THE BOOK UNSEALED.

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” (Revelation vi. 1-8.)

THE visions of John in Patmos are awfully grand and wonderfully mysterious. They have no parallel in literature. They have not only claimed the attention of learned commentators in all ages of the Church, but they have inspired genius and evoked some of the highest productions of art. His first vision was that of the Son of God walking amidst the seven golden candlesticks. His second was exceed-

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ingly complex, and consisted of a throne set in heaven, and one sat upon the throne. He was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. Around the throne were four-and-twenty seats, and upon them four-and-twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment and with crowns of gold upon their heads. And before the throne was a sea of glass like unto crystal, and in the midst of the throne were four beasts full of eyes, and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come. Then he saw in the right hand of him that sat upon the throne a book written, and sealed with seven seals. And he saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals? And no man was able. John wept; and one of the elders said: "Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Then he beheld the Lamb as he took the book, and opened one of the seals, and he saw and beheld a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer. I understand the sealed book to be the book of God's providence. When the seal is broken, John sees the different instrumentalities employed to carry out the designs which a finite mind may not question, and is hardly able to understand.

The white horse and his rider represent a pure Christianity. The horse is chosen as the emblem of power and speed.

1. Christianity has within it all the elements of great power. It has the power of truth. Truth is powerful, and remains unharmed amid the most determined and violent opposition, and by its own inherent vitality pushes its way through prejudice and passion, through the darkness of ignorance and the folly of fanaticism, to the people sitting in darkness and in the region and shadow of death. As immortal as its great Author, its power is well nigh omnipotent. Originating in the bosom of God, it has its home in the heart of Christianity, from which no opposition can dislodge it and no demonism can exorcise it. There it is, and there it will remain forever. It strikes in every pulsation, vibrates in every nerve, and thrills in every moral fiber of our holy religion. Without it religion is a sham, God a nullity, and man an orphan. Without it the Bible would have no claims and the Church no beauty. It is the foundation of our faith, the light of our hope, the dream of our childhood, and the joy of our age. It is at once the offspring of God, the brightest star on the sky of eternity, and the mighty centripetal force which holds Christianity indissolubly fastened to the throne set in heaven.

2. Christianity has the power of love surpassing all other love. Love flames in the incense that burns in Christian hearts. It gushes in sacred melody; it flashes in all the precious promises; it is mingled with every providence, and makes up all of human redemption. It gave the Son of God to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. It opened to the nations the great gospel dispensation, and gave the invitation to all of earth's sighing sons of sor-

row and of crime, to "Come, for all things are now ready."

3. Christianity has a still higher power, the power of the Holy Spirit. The whole system is interpenetrated by the Holy Ghost.

It is the Spirit, glowing in truth and warming in love, that reaches the intellect and touches the heart. It was the Spirit that breathed upon the dark night of chaos, and order reigned and darkness fled like night before the rising sun. It is the Spirit that breathes upon the dark chaos of man's moral nature, and order reigns in all his passions, and light gleams through all the dark passages of his soul. The whiteness of the horse represents the purity of our divine system. White is nearly always the symbol of purity. So we speak of the white throne, and the white robes, etc.

4. Christianity is pure. It has no spot or stain; it is without fault. Born of God, it bears his image and shines in his likeness. It is all pure. In precept and in promise, in doctrine, in law, in the principles it inculcates and in the emotions which it stirs, it is all pure. White, spotless white, is the proper symbol of a system whose purity is as fresh and unsoiled to-day as the snow upon the tops of the mountains, and which will remain uncontaminated by the breath of sin while countless ages roll. The robes of Christianity will retain their whiteness as long as God sits upon his throne, and the voice of the many angels around the throne is heard, saying, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." The royal appearance of him that sat

upon the white horse denotes his royal authority. Christ is our King. All authority belongs to him. His crown is untarnished, his throne is stainless and pure. He has no rival, and all opposition to his authority is as wicked as it must at last prove unavailing. The Father hath said "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. They shall perish, but thou remainest. They all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. The bow and arrows, and the going forth conquering and to conquer, indicate the aggressive power of Christianity. It is the great image-breaker of the world. It puts out the fires on heathen altars and hushes the oracles which superstition deified for thousands of years. It crushes the idols which have long held sway over the minds of the ignorant, and undermines the very foundations of the temples in which their infamous orgies are held. It pushes its conquests beyond the borders of civilization, and pours the effulgence of its light and the riches of its blessings upon the great moral Saharas which serve only to add to the gloom of earth, and to increase its dreariness. The cross, its sacred symbol, is to-day catching the rays of every rising and of every setting sun. It stands as a beacon light upon every shore, and throws out its radiance over the dark and tempestuous sea on which our race has suffered shipwreck. It is as uncompromising as it is iconoclastic. Against all false religions and opposed to every form of vice it moves steadily forward to the conquest of the world. No barrier can stop its

progress, and no opposition can prevent its final triumph.

5. Another seal is broken. Another horse, that was red, went forth. Providence is revealed in another form as frightful as the other was sublime. War is now symbolized. He becomes the God of battles. As the wheels of his providence move on he employs war with garments rolled in blood to carry out his strange designs and accomplish his wonderful purposes. This is a most vivid representation of war. Power is given to the red horse to take peace from the earth. War is a horrible scourge. It engenders the worst vices. It inflames the most violent passions. It is the greatest enemy of civilization. It produces countless sorrows. In its presence wealth and law and order disappear. From its grim visage virtue and truth flee away, and happiness and peace are banished. It is the savage enemy of all righteousness, and the remorseless destroyer of human life. Its path is destruction. It sweeps like the hurricane and carries all before it. With a fury like the ravings of the volcano, it carries desolation along its blood-stained path. It feeds on the ruin of states and the downfall of empires. With fire and sword it spreads dismay along the whole line of its march. Cities are consumed, and fruitful fields no longer wave their rich harvests, and want takes the place of smiling plenty. Its curse falls with the most blighting effect upon the wretched inhabitants of countries involved in the fearful struggle, and is felt more or less by the most distant nations. Its heritage is the heritage of woe. It is the prolific source of widowhood and orphanage. Under

its power men become tigers, and the thirst for human blood is absolutely ungovernable. Its terrible chorus is the roar of cannon, the rattle of musketry, the scream of shells, answered by the groan of the dying and the wail of the bereaved. It calls the world to a feast of human blood, and all its trophies are literally dabbled in human gore. Its monuments are formed of human bones, and all its pomp and circumstance are sound and fury, expressive of little beyond human calamity. It has shed oceans of blood and destroyed countless millions of wealth. And yet God employs this fearful scourge to turn man from his wickedness and lead the nations to himself. As the skillful mariner avails himself of adverse winds to drive his vessel to the desired port, so God turns war itself to good account, and makes it one of the mighty forces in his hand to advance that which is best calculated to destroy. Man proposes and God disposes. The red horse, the symbol of war, is made to move in harmony with the white horse, the emblem of peace. Wrath combines with love to bring man to God. Two forces as opposite as the centripetal and the centrifugal combine to make the moral world move in its appointed orbit. The wonderful wheels of Providence all move right on to the accomplishment of the infallible will of the Almighty.

6. The third seal is opened. Lo, a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. Then follows the despairing cry: "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." It is the picture of famine—black famine. It follows the bloody picture of war. Want, craving

want, unsatisfied hunger, men and women left to starve; poor children famishing, and without even the husks of the prodigal to feed upon—all these follow in the track of war. The black horse follows the red. Famine comes after the sword. The genius of famine, lean, hungry and gaunt, follows the genius of war—grows fat on human flesh. One kills outright, the other kills by slow degrees. One sheds human blood, the other dries it up. Both bring incalculable woe, and fill the world with incalculable suffering. And yet the ruler of nations makes the cruelties of war end in the songs of peace, and the horrors of famine are by his power converted into the joys of harvest. He makes famine the instrument to cause the nations to learn righteousness, and fill the world with gladness and praise. His very scourges are sent in mercy, and by his sovereign love he converts the murmurings of earth to the harmonies of heaven. If by his own great power he withholds the rain and the sunshine, he does it that the poverty of earth may be finally exchanged for the abundance of paradise restored.

7. The fourth seal is opened, and behold a pale horse. Death sat upon him, and Hell followed with him. Death on the pale horse moves over the earth “to kill with the sword and with hunger and with death.” The horse is still the symbol of power, and that power is wielded by the stalwart arm of death, the destroyer of kings and of kingdoms. Its resources are immense, and its conquests have been commensurate with its resources. Its victims are confined to no rank, and belong to every age. It moves on the wings of the tempest and treads in the

earthquake. It strikes in the thunderbolt, and threatens in the storm. It desolates the palace, and fills the cottage with its ravages. It strikes down youth and palsies age. It makes the eye dim and the ear deaf. It pales the cheek of health, and chills the hot blood of life. It depopulates the city, and fills the vast cemetery with its countless victims. It comes in the frost of winter, in the flowers of spring, in the fruits of autumn, and in the hot breath of summer. It silences the tongue of the orator, and hushes the voice of the sweet singer. We may fear it, but we cannot avoid it. No darkness can hide us from death, and no locks or bolts can keep out the pale horse and his rider. The visits of the great destroyer may be unwelcome, but they are sure to come. Armed with a scythe, the monster mows down generation after generation with a rapacity which nothing but the conquest of the race can satisfy. It is as universal as the human race, and as ubiquitous as Divine Providence. It is one of the instruments which God in his providence wields for the good of man. It is personified in the vision, and presented as a mighty conqueror riding upon a livid horse and swaying a scepter whose very touch brings dust to dust, earth to earth, and ashes to ashes. Yet this monster so cruel and this tyrant so terrible is made in the vision to move along in the same line with the white horse, whose rider goes forth with his crown and sword, his bow and arrows, to make the moral conquest of the world.

The lesson, then, of the entire vision is that Providence is uniform, and that its aim is one. Its instruments are as various as life and death, as the gospel

of peace and the red hand of war, as the blessings of life and the cup of death, yet they are all directed to the accomplishment of the grand design to save rebellious man.

Providence is wonderful. It is complicated, and yet it is one. It is the one great mind guiding events and controlling issues, so as to accomplish most of good for a world in revolt. It was revealed to Ezekiel in a picture of wheels within wheels moving straight on to the consummation of the grand purpose of Him who has his way with the armies of heaven and among the nations of the earth. In this vision of John we see four horses moving in concert, governed by one great mind and carrying out his unerring plans. What a scene is here! Christianity takes the lead. The white horse, unchecked by bridle or curb, circling round the world and making his conquests among all nations, is closely followed by the red horse pawing in the valley, snuffing the breeze afar off, and with sounding bugle and clashing arms bringing dismay and ruin. Then, following at his heels is the black horse, and he that sat on him has the balances in his hand, and cries: "A measure of wheat for a penny; . . . and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." The wail of want comes as the undertone to the tramp of war. And last of all, but close in the rear, follow the pale horse and his rider, with mowing scythes and nodding plumes. Along the ages, around the centuries, over the continents, and across the seas they move, gathering strength as they go, swifter than light, awful as eternity, and terrible as human destiny. Never did they appear more terrible. The world is agitated. The nations

are moved. The seas rage and the waves roar. The great world shakes under their rapid march. The end comes. Hell follows. Destiny is fixed. The wheels of providence stop. The horses disappear. The judgment sets, and the vision of Providence closes amid its fires.

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